



Great Public Schools

Great Public Service

**Testimony Before the Senate Education Committee
HB 1144
Monday, March 24, 2025**

Chairman Beard and members of the Committee, I am Nick Archuleta, and I am the president of North Dakota United. I appear before you today in opposition to HB 1144 and to urge a ***do not pass*** recommendation for this piece of legislation.

Members of the Committee, HB 1144 represents an extreme solution to a problem that does not exist. In so doing, this legislation usurps the authority of local school boards and, if passed, may force school districts across the state to incur tens of millions of dollars in renovation expenses. In West Fargo alone, that cost could be over \$8M.

Mr. Chairman, I do not say that this legislation is unnecessary lightly. I am simply agreeing with what House Majority Leader Mike Lefor stated on the floor of the House when the author of HB 1144 tried in vain to seek a vote on a version of this bill during 2023's special session. The Majority Leader said, as recounted in an October 24, 2023, column by Rob Port, ***"This matter should be handled locally," he said, mentioning that he had contacted the state Department of Public Instruction to inquire about what the process would be for a school official, or school district, out of compliance with the law. He said a complaint would have to be filed, at which point DPI would investigate and potentially instruct local law enforcement and local prosecutors to enforce the law. 'DPI has not received a complaint' about Fargo's noncompliance, he said."***

At ND United, we agree with the Majority Leader. To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, DPI has still not received such a complaint. What the Majority Leader outlined indicates that there already exists a means by which those who are not compliant with the law can be held accountable, thus rendering HB 1144 redundant and unnecessary. In addition, the amendments to the bill regarding bathroom design are decisions better left to the local school boards. As for involving the Attorney

General's office in these matters without allocating the requisite resources to conduct investigations, HB 1144 would potentially pull AG staff from the important work they do each day.

Mr. Chairman, this legislature should resist the temptation to further marginalize transgender children. Rather, the legislature and our state are better served by helping our schools promote safe and welcoming school cultures where all of North Dakota's kids can follow their dreams and prepare to be responsible members of our communities.

For these reasons, Chairman Beard, and members of the Committee, I urge a ***do not pass*** for HB 1144.