

Dear Chair Lee and the members of the human service committee,

I'm writing today to express my strong opposition to HB 1430, which would undermine the North Dakota Board's efforts to protect LGBTQIA+ individuals from the harmful practice of conversion therapy.

The North Dakota Board invested countless hours of research and consultation with professional associations to develop administrative rules that prohibit conversion therapy. This effort was rooted in the overwhelming scientific consensus that conversion therapy is not only ineffective but also causes significant harm to individuals, particularly youth.

Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have already banned conversion therapy, with five additional states implementing partial bans. It's crucial that North Dakota joins this growing list of states that prioritize the well-being and safety of their LGBTQIA+ citizens.

As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, I've witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of these harmful practices on my friends and loved ones. The emotional trauma, alarming rates of attempted suicide, and disproportionate levels of depression and substance abuse are all stark reminders of the dangers of this discredited practice.

Forcing individuals into a state of not belonging is unethical and inhumane. It's our responsibility as a society to create a supportive and inclusive environment that allows everyone to thrive, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

I urge you to reject HB 1430 and uphold the North Dakota Board's efforts to protect our community from the harmful effects of conversion therapy. Together, we can create a safer, more compassionate North Dakota for all.

Thank you for your time.

Chelsea Gagner