

My name is Annie Prafcke. While I was adopted from the city of Wuhu in Anhui Province, China at 6 months old, I have lived almost my entire life in Fargo, where I now work as a journalist.

I write to you today to ask you to vote “no” on HB 1317 because it denies unmarried couples, homosexuals and single people the same opportunities as heterosexual married couples for adoption. Specifically, I believe this bill is unconstitutional on the basis of Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bans discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex and national origin.

My mother adopted me from China in 1996 and returned shortly after in 2001 to adopt my younger sister, Ellie. As a single parent unable to have kids of her own, adoption was a way for my mom to fulfill her desire to raise children. In all my 25 years, she has shown me more love than I could have imagined from a mother. She dedicated hours to reading books with my sister and me in elementary school, taught us the value of service through preparing 500 turkey dinners every Thanksgiving at First Presbyterian Church Fargo, and drove us all around North Dakota to orchestra rehearsals and gymnastics meets. Today, she continues to patiently support us to follow our dreams and ambitions.

While HB 1317 states that the Department will provide financial assistance to people married to the opposite sex for costs associated with a pregnancy resulting in the adoption of a newborn, this funding excludes prospective parents who do not fall into this category, including homosexual couples, unmarried couples, and single parents like my mother.

The costs of adoption can be high, especially if it is an intercountry adoption, such as mine and my sister’s. Financial assistance could certainly provide immense help to those pursuing adoption, however, it is unjust to deny these funds to people on the basis of sex, sexual orientation or marital status.

It pains me to think that kind, goodhearted people like my mother might be discriminated against in their journey to start a family. Perhaps worse, in excluding deserving prospective parents from this financial assistance, I worry it will prevent children currently in foster care, or in orphanages like I was, to be adopted into loving families.

I urge you to please vote “no” on this bill.