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Senate Industry, Business and Labor Committee
Oppose HB 1144
Chairman Jerry Klein

Dear Chairman Klein and Members of the Senate Industry, Business and Labor Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter for your consideration concerning HB 1144. AT&T opposes HB1144.

HB1144 is a broad piece of legislation aimed at protecting free speech "from racial, religious, and viewpoint discrimination by a social media platform or interactive computer service;" AT&T understands the intentions of the legislation, however, as drafted the bill employs very broad definitions that could have unintended consequences and sweep in entities, websites, services or platforms, that do not engage in the described censorship. It may also inhibit their ability to pursue lawful practices, such as the ability to remove content that is illegal, or content that violates or misappropriates copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property rights, including impersonation, threatens immediate or specific violence, or otherwise unlawful content.

While this bill highlights an area of public concern and this committee provides a legitimate venue for discussion and debate of these issues, ultimately reforms such as those proposed in HB1144 must be narrowly and carefully tailored to avoid unintended and potentially harmful consequences.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Riley,
President – AT&T North Dakota