

House Bill #1488

68th Legislative Session

Representatives: Marschall, Heilman, Hoverson, Koppelman, Longmuir, Wagner
Senators: Clemens, Magrum, Wobbema

I am writing in opposition to this time, House Bill #1488.

I do not understand why this legislative body finds it necessary to require students to get parental permission to join a school club. There have not been any issues before so why now? The only reason I can think of is for the impeding of students to join a Gay, Straight Alliance Club also know as GSA Club in their school. I don't understand why the adults of North Dakota are attacking our youth, in particular the LGBTQ youth of North Dakota.

As a parent and native North Dakotan, I was raised to accept everyone for who they are and to yet this bill is doing the exact opposite. This bill is designed to be a barrier for LGBTQ youth who have not come out to their parents yet or whose parents are closed minded and not supportive of the LGBTQ community. There isn't anything helpful or positive in House Bill #1488.

As parents we encourage our children to learn and be a steward of our community. How is this bill fostering learning or stewardship? This bill is keeping kids from learning about their peers or maybe even learning something about themselves. This bill also doesn't foster stewardship, the helping and bringing together students.

There hasn't been a need to have parental permission until now and this is all because adults don't understand transgender people and think that this is a way to stop people from being transgender. That is the way people ignorant of the facts think.

I am a parent of a transgender person who went to public school in North Dakota. My child had a supportive mother who encouraged my children to join clubs. My daughter joined the GSA Club in her high school and she enjoyed it. My daughter got to meet kids from different grades. This isn't an opportunity for the gathering of just LGBTQ people but also straight kids who might have a family member in the LGBTQ group. GSA Clubs offer all the kids a chance to come together and have fun, do activities and just be there to listen to each other, be friends and know that all the kids are accepted no matter how they identify themselves. No one is rejected, made to feel bad for who they are but the exact opposite, the kids can be themselves, each and everyone of them.

GSA Clubs are not clubs that indoctrinate straight kids to be gay, lesbian or transgender. That is impossible; gay, lesbians and transgender people are born that way. Straight kids who attend a GSA Club are being supportive, are allies for their gay, lesbian or transgender peers and also are more empathetic in nature. GSA Clubs talk about current issues that impact the LGBTQ community. This is a living, breathing civics class. An adult advisor monitors the group so there isn't anything being done or discussed without an adult present.

Why are the legislators trying to curb acceptance, tolerance and the overall development of humanity within our schools? Schools are a place where these kids can gather with their peers and come together in a good and nurturing environment. A GSA Club has just as much right to be in schools as other clubs.

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Mandating students to ask for permission to go to a GSA Club is equal to mandating students to get a permission slip to go to any school event. You require students to get permission slips for ball games, hockey games, and all student events that happen on school grounds.

What this legislative body needs to do is allow the schools to continue to operate as is and leave the GSA Clubs and LGBTQ students alone. Instead of trying to exterminate transgender students with all these anti-transgender bills such as HB #1488, learn about these kids. Gain wisdom where ignorance thrives. I ask you where is your humanity in this bill and the other anti-transgender bills.

The way our future leaders will learn to live and be successful once they are adults stems from their experiences they have in school and in their community. What signal are you sending our youths by singling out the GSA Clubs and especially the transgender kids in North Dakota? Do you think our youth is getting the idea that it's ok to discriminate against people who are not carbon copies of their friends or themselves? They are exactly learning that it's ok to discriminate, to exclude and deprive others their civil rights.

This bill, HB #1488 also isn't what our Lord taught. Jesus taught love, acceptance and encouraged everyone to help one another. This bill is far from what Jesus taught and is the exact opposite. House Bill #1488 encourages hate, oppression and teaching kids to gang up and marginalize those who already have no voice. The authors of this bill and the other like it are bullies, picking on the LGBTQ youth of North Dakota. As adults, you should be looking to protect, help and show empathy to these kids. As law makers you have the obligation to look at both sides objectively and also learn the hard facts from both sides. No religious or false news influences should taint the decisions of the legislators.

A GSA Club in my daughters school helped her feel accepted, supported and excited to be amongst people in school because of the nurturing and support this club gave her. How is that bad? How can anyone who is knowledgeable about GSA Clubs feel threatened by the existence of these clubs?

I ask you to talk to a GSA group, go visit one and see for yourself the good things these groups do and learn for yourselves there isn't anything to fear from these groups whatsoever. Ask a parent of kids who attend GSA clubs how they feel and if they have any concerns.

I encourage you to vote no on House Bill #1488.

Kristie Miller
Parent of Transgender