

Testimony of Erin Price  
opposing  
HOUSE BILL NO. 1488  
House Education Committee  
February 7, 2023

Dear Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Erin Price, and I am an Associate Professor of English at Bismarck State College. It is my honor to also be the faculty advisor for BSC's LGBT+ Club. I am submitting testimony to you today on behalf of myself and the Club members of Bismarck State College – many of whom were too scared to write to you themselves. They did not want their names on official testimony for fear of retribution from family, friends, and strangers. We are urging you to **oppose** and vote **DO NOT PASS** on HB 1488.

These incredibly talented, kind, funny, full-of-promise students live with this fear in the back of their minds constantly – just because they want to live authentically. I assure you; they are not fearful due to paranoia. I have been teaching since 2006 and many (too many) of my students at BSC have confided in me that they have been ostracized by family because they are in the LGBT+ community. They are marginalized and unsupported in too many ways, and HB 1488 will force our kids further into the shadows.

Take, for instance, a student of mine whose father often threatens to “beat the gay” out of people, and whose mother claims that “no gays will set foot in this house”. My student (who is gay) found solace in his school's GSA – not at home – and his involvement in this club, according to him, kept him alive in high school. Forcing students to obtain parent permission to join clubs can truly be a threat to the mental and physical health of our students. Maybe not for everyone, but even one student is too many, and passage of this bill will negatively affect countless students.

Further, according to data from the ND Department of Public Instruction, only 5-7% of LGBT+ kids in North Dakota feel safe talking to their parents about their mental health. Nearly 72% of ND transgender youth report verbal abuse at home, and less than 50% of ND transgender youth felt they had safe adult to talk to. Almost 28% of ND transgender youth are not sleeping at home, and 20% are not at home at all anymore. These students need our support, not roadblocks.

Please **oppose HB 1488**.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Erin Price  
*Associate Professor of English*  
*Faculty Advisor, LGBT+ Club*

*Bismarck State College*