

House Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
Testimony in Favor of HB 1368
February 2, 2023

Chairman Schauer and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bette Grande and I thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony in favor of HB 1368.

This bill will benefit North Dakota's economy and reinforce our public policy to responsibly use taxpayer funds, while placing only minimal administrative demands upon the state.

First, let me begin by clarifying HB 1368's underlying rationale. The bill will create a basic anti-discrimination law that safeguards state funds from going to parties who would otherwise undermine important public policy protections that many North Dakotans rely upon. As you know, North Dakota regulates against many forms of discrimination and has a duty to invest and spend state funds prudently. HB 1368 keeps the threat of national origin-based bias away from our state's economy by defending our procurement and investment processes against discriminatory, unethical, and politically motivated business partners.

Considering that most states have already enacted laws with language similar to that of HB 1368, passing HB 1368 puts North Dakota in line with common national standards—and thus uniform. HB 1368 does not place any administrative duty upon the state to monitor marketplace activity. Contracting parties subject to the law would only need to submit a basic certification that they do not engage in discriminatory commercial practices as specified in the statute. The state's prohibited investment list will also only require minimal administrative effort to maintain. Officials would only need to undertake inquiries after being notified of particular cases where there is reason to believe parties may be participating in commercial discrimination prohibited by the statute.

As I mentioned, 35 American states have already adopted such anti-discrimination laws with overwhelming success demonstrated in their implementation and enforcement. In passing HB 1368, North Dakota will stand with 35 other states and protect public money from going to parties who choose to operate their businesses in ways that our state is against vital state interests.

Any business dealings the state forgoes with this bill are minimal compared with the message we send that our state is a safe place where trade with Israel is protected from outside interference by discriminating parties.

Israel is a strong and growing trade partner with benefits to our economy and the quality of life of North Dakotans in health sciences, agriculture and water, energy, all areas of tech R&D, and more. HB 1368 shows our commitment to maintain and grow this relationship.

I am happy to address any questions that you have for me.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bette Grande".

Bette Grande