Dear Legislators,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1254, which seeks to criminalize the treatment of transgender patients under the age of 18. This bill is not only discriminatory, but it also flies in the face of established medical science and the overwhelming consensus of the medical community.

I am one of the few Plastic Surgeons in North Dakota providing gender-affirming procedures, specifically chest masculinization and chest feminization, to treat gender dysphoria. I can personally attest the significant positive impact these treatments have on transgender patients, their quality of life, and their gender dysphoria. These results are not isolated to my own personal experiences. A plethora of peer-reviewed, published data have repeatedly shown the benefits of transgender care, for minors and adults. This is not opinion; these are data collected through rigorous scientific studies. It is studies such as these that guide and direct physicians and providers in the treatment of disease, disorders, and conditions affecting all people. As physicians and scientists, we follow these principals in the care of our patients. We are the experts. The intrusion of politics and government into the care of patients has no basis, refutes the standard of care, is discriminatory, and is dangerous for patients, not to mention is extremely hypocritical to the basic premise of the group of legislators supporting this bill.

There is a wealth of primary literature that supports the benefits of transgender care for minors. For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that "affirmative care for transgender and gender-diverse youth is necessary to promote health and well-being." The AAP also notes that "denying or delaying care can lead to significant mental health problems, such as depression and suicidality."

Additionally, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) states that "gender-affirming care for transgender and gender nonconforming children and adolescents is safe and effective." The WPATH also notes that "such care can improve mental health outcomes, including reducing suicidality."

Furthermore, the American Medical Association (AMA) has adopted a policy stating that "transgender individuals should have access to medically necessary care" and that "public and private health insurance plans should cover gender transition treatment."

In light of this overwhelming evidence, it is clear that HB 1254 is not only discriminatory, but it is also detrimental to the health and well-being of transgender minors. I urge you to reject this bill and instead work to ensure that all children, including transgender children, have access to the care they need.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Adams, MD
Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon