Annika Mitic
1017 Cottonwood St.
Grand Forks, ND 58201

To whom it may concern,

I would like to voice my opposition to HB1297. It is damaging to transgender individuals, their support systems, and our communities if birth records cannot be amended to recognize a transgender individual's sex designation.

As a result of these policies, it will lead transgender individuals to not feel safe receiving medical care, harming their mental health, and experiencing cyberbullying or in-person bullying when records do not affirm their identity.

This is already happening as a result of legislation like HB1297. 71% of LGBTQ youth have reported these policies have negatively impacted their mental health, one in three transgender and non-binary youth don't feel safe getting medical care when their doctor cannot provide gender-affirming care. Further, one in three LGBTQ youths experiences cyberbullying with one in five experiencing bullying in school (https://www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/new-poll-emphasizes-negative-impacts-of-anti-lgbtq-policies-on-lgbtq-youth).

Updating a birth record does not impose on the rights of someone who doesn't need to request such a change. It doesn't reduce the meaning of the gender marker, in fact, it highlights the importance of that identity. It is worth it for someone to go through the hassle and bureaucracy to make that change so that they can live freely, receive the medical care they need/deserve, and function as an active member of society with the gender marker that represents their identity.

Please do not support HB1297 for the sake of our community and the amazing, diverse individuals who live in North Dakota.

Thank you for your consideration,
Annika Mitic