



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Testimony Re: HB 1473

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Rep. SuAnn Olson.

Late last year I attended a meeting of concerned women and learned of a "Bill of Rights" that was moving across our nation. Don't we already have one of those? Well yes, but the Bill of Rights that has been circulating is a Women's Bill of Rights. Who would have thought that we need one? But we do. Women struggled and sacrificed for decades to gain equal rights. It took our country 140 years before women won the right to vote! And here we are, in 2023, more than a hundred years later, needing to fight for some of our basic rights. Women and girls are needing to fight for their right to safety and privacy.

Here are some excerpts, some truths, in the Women's Bill of Rights that I will be introducing as a Resolution later this week:

Biological differences between the sexes mean that males are, on average, bigger, stronger, and faster than females;

Biological differences between the sexes leave females more physically vulnerable than males to specific forms of violence, including sexual violence;

Females have historically suffered from discrimination in education, athletics, and employment;

Biological differences between the sexes are enduring and may, in some circumstances, warrant the creation of separate social, educational, athletic, or other spaces in order to ensure safety and/or to allow members of each sex to succeed and thrive;

Inconsistencies in court rulings and policy initiatives with respect to the definitions of 'sex,' 'male,' 'female,' 'man,' and 'woman' have led to endangerment of single-sex spaces and resources, thereby necessitating clarification of certain terms,

HB 1473 embodies the practical application of this Bill of Rights. It essentially requires that separate restrooms, shower rooms, and locker rooms be used only by that facility's designated sex. This applies to correctional facilities, the youth correctional center, the penitentiary, domestic violence sexual assault facilities, college dormitories and public schools. The bill does not prohibit reasonable accommodations from being made for others.

This is the fourth bill that you have heard this morning that touches on the same topic. I am open to amending duplicative portions out of this bill or in some manner combining the bills into one or several. What is paramount is that we protect women and girls.

Note that HB 1474, which you will hear tomorrow, includes definitions of sex, male and female, and father and mother so that there is no confusion under state law when these terms are used. Certainly, if the committee recommends that they be included in this bill, I am open to that. If HB 1474 passes, it may make sense to reference the NDCC definitions in this bill.

We don't have to look very hard to find news stories about the danger women face when transgender individuals use the same facilities as women or girls. Certainly, the Loudon County VA school was in the news for months as a result of two incidents of girls being assaulted or raped by a male using a girls' bathroom. About a year ago, a women's prison in New Jersey was reported by several news organizations to have several inmates who had given birth as a result of being housed with males who claimed to be transgender. This is outrageous and beyond common sense.

Women have a right to Privacy and Safety. This is not too much to expect. I have 9 granddaughters. The oldest is nearly 10 and will be moving on to middle school soon. I want her to be safe in a restroom. She has a right to not undress in a girls' locker room in front of males with penises. She has a right to not view penises when she uses the restroom or a locker room. She has a right to be safe. She has a right to her own privacy.

Please. I urge you to Vote Yes on HB 1473.