

January 24th, 2023

From: ND Psychiatric Society

Re: In Opposition to HB 1473

Esteemed Chairman Weisz and Committee Members,

My name is Gabriela Balf, I am a psychiatrist in Bismarck and a Clinical Associate Professor at UND, and I speak on my behalf.

Have you gone to the bathroom while in the Capitol yet?

Let me tell you what my transgender patients tell me: they don't go. They avoid going to the bathroom and risk to be **bullied or assaulted** (72.7% ND kids report not feeling safe in school, 62% report bullying on the school property). This bill will only increase their distress, while not addressing any real problems.

The literature presents the consequences of the current bathroom/locker room gender-segregation, which this bill will enshrine into law:

- Kids don't drink fluids all day long and they get **dehydration**
- They may **faint**
- Increased rates of **urinary tract infections**
- Increased rates of **kidney stones**
- Their physical education performance decreases when dehydrated or having a full bladder.
- Their academic performance decreases (reports of **lower GPA**) decreases when dehydrated or having a full bladder
- They start skipping school, or may simply **drop out of school**.
- The rates of depression, suicide attempts and substance use disorders increase, aggravating an already **significant public health problem**.
- The kids who have the possibility **leave the state**.
- Their peers and families suffer.

There have been no reported instances of transgender children/youth assaulting cis children in the bathroom or locker room circumstances.

There are staggering rates of verbal, physical and sexual assault on transgender children/youth.

In 2021 there were at least 50 homicides where the victims were transgender. Since these crimes have been tracked (documented in police records), there were 400+ crimes, and 3/4 of victims are 35 years and younger.

Therefore: Why persist in increasing minority stress for a small number of our children? When we face so many urgent issues related to the mental health of children in our state, why don't we spend your valuable time thinking about productive ways to address those, instead of wasting your days of selfless volunteering on **bills that are proven to harm and/or kill some of our children**, bills that will stain your legacy?

I urge you to be thoughtful when you vote for all the transgender bills that are coming your way, and listen to science. On behalf of our patients, we thank the House Human Services Committee for listening to our presentation of scientific evidence.



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