

To whom it may concern,

My testimony is in opposition to House Bill 1473 I ask that you give this bill a Do Not Pass.

The reason behind this is that this bill affects people I care about a lot, as well as people I don't know well enough yet. I am aware of the impacts this bill will have on the transgender community because I am a transman who has lived in this state my entire life. Who is not afraid to be out and proud of who I am. Yet, this bill would make us feel as if our existence in this state is meaningless, even for those who have lived in this state their entire lives and refuse to leave. If you look at it through our eyes, House Bill 1473 would be classifying restrooms and locker/shower rooms in schools and other state facilities as single sex, with sex defined as the gender assigned at birth, this is the case. This means that transgender people will be denied access to places that affirm their gender identity.

Whereas why you should care about that, is because there are transgender people who do still live in North Dakota. A survey done by the Williams Institute, a UCLA School of Law, found that 0.43% of adults (18+) identify as transgender. Yet, when it comes to the youth (13-17), it is 1.16% of their population. To put that in numbers, there were 500 youth and 2,500 adults that identify as transgender. That is little more than the population of New Town, ND if you know where that is located.

Some of us stay here in North Dakota because either we can't afford to move, or because we don't want to leave our families. Honestly, with this bill, it is making it harder to live in this state restricting our rights to use the restroom that fits gender identity. How often have you been looking at the type of restrooms available at both public and private places? I am not sure how often you see family restroom, or even gender neutral restroom in places. I even still remember my high school, Central High School, having about two, and the one that was available was located all the way in the basement. There was a lot of stairs to climb down and up every day. There were times I avoided drinking and eating due to the fear of not being able to use the restroom or even the changing room due to the fact that the single use was sometimes locked and unavailable for no reason.

Yes, you heard me right, I was afraid to use restrooms and changing rooms in my own high school due to my safety. I know for the fact there are others like me who are afraid. This bill will add on to these feelings due to you are restricting where we belong. Sure, this bill has in section 7 part 3 states that it does not prohibit a school administrator from providing a reasonable accommodation for a student, including a transgender or gender-nonconforming student. Reasonable accommodation may include the use of a single occupancy restroom or changing facility. This section is on public schools or buildings on school district premises. Yet, I still remember what my gym teacher offered for accommodations for I could use in high school when I came out as trans. I had two options, change in the single-use restroom in the new gym that was across was in the other building next door to the locker room, but I would be counted late. The second option was I could get change in the women's gym teacher's office behind a curtain. None of those felt safe or welcoming. I didn't pick either, because what I did instead was, I had my gym clothes underneath my clothes. Just imagine what I experienced happening to many others in this state if this bill passes.

Which brings me to section 5, part 1: "In a dormitory or living facility controlled by an institution under the control of the state board of higher education, a restroom or shower room accessible by multiple residents at the same time must be designated for use exclusively for males or exclusively for female." This part of the bill is affecting higher education living. I know for a fact some dormitories at UND are co-

ed. They share restrooms and living spaces, and there has yet to be an issue. I can not say about other colleges through, so that's just my own statement from what I know.

The thing with this section is like many of the sections in this bill, it restricts transgender students. Sure, it states, "This section does not prohibit a dormitory administrator or dormitory staff member from providing a reasonable accommodation for a resident, including a transgender or gender-nonconforming resident." Have you thought what that would look? You are pretty much separating transgender students from experiencing dorm life on campus. I feel like it should be up to the college when it comes to things like this due to the fact most college students are 18 or older. Our brains are a bit more developed compared to youth. We belong in this state no matter what others think.

That is why I ask you once again to give this bill a Do Not Pass.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Charles J Vondal". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

Signed

Charles J Vondal