

01/23/2023

HB 1522

Testimony in Opposition

Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

I urge you to vote DO NOT PASS on HB 1522.

Gender dysphoria is a medical condition that when untreated can lead to distress, depression, and possibly suicide. Preventing transgender students from having an outlet in their school to express themselves, explore themselves with a school counselor or teacher, or generally feel safe to be them self, will lead to dangerous and harmful outcomes. Should this bill pass and be implemented in our state, queer youth will experience worsened mental health, increased likelihood for running away, becoming homeless and/or trafficked, decrease in school functioning, and increased suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

There is no harm in creating safe places for diverse students. What is the benefit in prohibiting a student from using a gender-neutral bathroom? Targeting these students who are already at higher risk is dangerous and inhumane.

Consider the headache this puts on our public and private school system in North Dakota. To roll back the safety students feel in their school counselor's office or the programs that are already in place throughout the state for transgender youth. Our country is already dealing with recovery from the impact of COVID-19. If you know anyone who works in the school setting, you know morale is already down and we are still struggling to adequately staff our classrooms. Imposing this oppressive bill will only add more stress onto the teachers, administrators, and other school staff who work so hard to educate and take care of our students.

Thank you for your time,

Naomi Tabassum, LPCC

Owner/President/Clinician

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