

January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

From: ND Psychiatric Society

**Re: In Opposition to HB 1522**

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.

As presented in testimonies for the previous bills this morning,

1. Transgender condition is a real medical condition – medical term is Gender Incongruence\*. I have presented earlier the science, including imaging studies that clearly reflect the reality of this condition.
2. The mental distress that some transgender people experience as a result of Gender Incongruence condition + non-affirming conditions = Gender Dysphoria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM5 (available on APA website at <https://dsm.psychiatryonline.org/>)
3. School environment is crucial for the mental and physical wellbeing of children. This bill proposes to transform it into a hostile environment and increase minority stress, which will have the already proven effects of increasing the rates of depression, suicide attempts and substance use disorder among the transgender population AND their cis peers.
4. This school environment may contravene with the rights that parents supportive of their transgender child have to control the child's education as spelled in SB 2260.

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 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.



Gabriela Balf-Soran, MD, MPH

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ND Psychiatric Society Past-President

World Professional Association Transgender Health member

\*The Manual of International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11) eliminates the term “transsexualism” and replaces it with the term “Gender Incongruence” (GI)<sup>9</sup>. This new terminology will no longer be part of the chapter on mental disorders (chapter 6) but a new chapter is created (chapter 17) called “conditions related to sexual health”.