



**Kayla Schmidt – Interim Executive Director, North Dakota Women’s Network
Opposition – HB 1522
North Dakota House Human Services Committee**

January 24, 2023

Dear Chair Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee,

My name is Kayla Schmidt and I am the Interim Executive Director of the North Dakota Women’s Network. We are a statewide organization with members and advocates located across North Dakota. I am providing testimony in opposition to HB 1522.

Within our mission to improve the lives of women, we have three areas of focus: leadership, opportunity, and equality. HB 1522 is a direct conflict to the positive outcomes we work to create through those areas of focus.

HB 1522 prohibits private and public schools, their teachers, and leadership from providing accommodations to transgender students. This bill needlessly places restrictions on our schools and our educators, and threatens them with the burden of financial penalties.

These bills create an environment of discrimination and exclusion in North Dakota institutions. This harms our state’s youth, families, and future. Whereas we often hear about the need to invest in North Dakota’s economic growth, legislation like this is a deterrent for modern families and workers to want to live or work in our state.

Similar attempts to pass discriminatory legislation in North Dakota has strongly been opposed by community leaders, athletic organizations, medical experts, social workers, parents, educators, students, faith leaders, representatives of local Chambers of Commerce and tourism organizations, and the LGBTQ+ community.

The North Dakota Women’s Network stands with these groups and asks that HB1522 receives a Do Not Pass Recommendation.

Thank you.

Kayla Schmidt
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