



100 4th St S, Ste 608,
Fargo, ND, 58103
Phone: 701-264-5200
Fax: 701-999-2779
www.canopymedicalclinic.com
Email: info@canopymedicalclinic.com

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Re: SB 2260 – Relating to Fundamental Parental Rights, Parental Involvement in Education, and Parental Right to Consent to Medical Treatment of the Parent's Child

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

My name is Kara Gloe. I am a mental health therapist licensed in both North Dakota and Minnesota. I work at Canopy Medical Clinic in Fargo, ND. Among the primary populations of people I serve are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, aromantic, and Two Spirit (LGBTQIA2S+) folks in North Dakota – including students in North Dakota’s public schools. I am a former elected school board member and I have two children in public schools. It is from these intersecting experiences that I urge you to vote **Do Not Pass on SD 2260**. If passed, this bill would do irreparable harm to transgender students throughout North Dakota, be costly and contains no funding mechanism, and drive teachers out of the state.

First, the data on the lethality of being a young trans person in the State of North Dakota is concrete. For trans high schoolers in North Dakota we know:

- More than half seriously considered suicide in the last year
- That rate is 3.3 times higher than their straight cisgender counterparts
- 30.4% attempted suicide in the past 12 months
- That is five times higher than their straight cisgender counterparts

This is data that focuses solely on youth in North Dakota, is from the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. These are the stats before the 2023 North Dakota legislature introduced multiple bills either directly targeting or severely disrupting the lives of our transgender friends, family, and neighbors. **Further, peer reviewed research from the Trevor Project shows transgender children who have one supportive adult in their lives are 39% less likely to attempt suicide.** This bill would rob so many children, who may not have one supportive adult at home, of the opportunity to have one at school. It is not hyperbolic to say, this bill will endanger the lives of North Dakota students.

Second, North Dakota school districts are already working on ways to get parents more involved with their child’s education. Schools have data that demonstrates kids with parents who are involved with

their education do better. This is not new information. Perhaps, North Dakota's time and money would be better spent helping parents attain work/life balance, so they are able to be more involved with their child's education.

Third, what is the funding mechanism that would make these new requirements possible or is this another unfunded mandate schools will be forced to manage?

Lastly, this bill will absolutely drive teachers out of the state. During my time on the board, I heard teachers say, time and again, that teaching now is drastically different from teaching 20 years ago. Kids are coming to school with more trauma and less support. Teachers are continually asked to do more with less, and to thank them for their tireless efforts, the North Dakota legislature proposes more restrictions and less flexibility on teachers, who are already bending over backward to do just about everything in this bill.

North Dakota students need to be able to rely on their teachers, principals, and school staff to support them, if they are not getting that support at home. North Dakota teachers and school districts need to be able to rely on the North Dakota Legislature to remove barriers to providing high quality education to all students. For these reasons I urge you to vote ***Do Not Pass on SB 2260.***

Sincerely,
Kara Gloe, LMSW
Canopy Medical Clinic