

# House Human Services Committee

## Senate Bill 2260 - Written Testimony

Andrew Alexis Varvel

North Dakota State Capitol

March 22, 2023

Pioneer Room

9:30AM

Chairman Weisz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Alexis Varvel. I live in Bismarck, District 47.

I oppose Senate Bill 2260 as written.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the sponsors of this legislation for bringing it forward. Several features of this bill are things that I could wholeheartedly agree with. In particular, I strongly support Section 1 subsection 6, which prohibits schools from withholding health information from a parent. And some of the features of this bill are things that I wish could have been around when I was a child. I do have a few quibbles, though.

Included with this testimony is some correcting language.

Please delete Page 2 Line 31.

Stating a parental right to "participate in parent-teacher associations and school organizations" may sound good, yet this "right" could easily go awry. Some parents can be disruptive. If participating in parent-teacher associations is a right, then it becomes more difficult for a school to deal with a parent who becomes disruptive. Ditto for school organizations.

Should an atheist parent have a right to intrude on the proceedings of a religious club at school?

So, Section 1 subsection 3 subsection m goes too far.

Please delete Section 2. It creates far too much red tape.

Subsection 2, subsection a would either not be meaningful or it would swamp teachers with conflicting demands from various parents.

Subsections b through d would crush spontaneity in the classroom. Teachers should have space to go on tangents, and for teachers to respond to what students want to learn. A cookie cutter approach to teaching is precisely not what we should have in public schools.

Concerning subsection e, it makes sense for parents to be informed about all extracurricular clubs and activities. That said, creating a procedure for a parent to withdraw a student from that club or activity over that student's objections may stunt a child's ability to make decisions down the road. Developing that capacity for making decisions is very important for adulthood.

This legislation would also interpose school policy - and the Century Code! - into family quarrels. Given that a parent already has a right to provide a child with alternative schooling, this provision is more trouble than it is worth.

Concerning subsection f, let's keep schools out of family quarrels.

Besides - it won't work. Fostering resistance to a name, nickname, or pronoun would only serve to promote greater attachment to it.

According to Not the Bee, a middle school boy asserted alternative pronouns early last August. Well, if banana says rock pronouns are banana and rock, then rock pronouns are banana and rock. Or would that be banana pronouns being rock and banana?

Don't sweat it.

<https://notthebee.com/article/middle-schooler-tells-teacher-his-pronouns-are-banana-and-rock-and-she-takes-to-tiktok-because-she-doesnt-know-if-hes-joking-or-if-she-should-actually-call-him-banana>

Concerning subsection g, a parent should have the primary responsibility to keep himself or herself informed. School districts should not be expected to swamp parents with more red tape, and treat parents as if they were children.

Subsection 3 is unnecessary.

Subsection 4 tells parents what to do. It uses "shall", not may.

Right now, Senate Bill 2260 desperately needs a major league tummy tuck. If this bill does not get salvaged with the changes that I am recommending here, please give this bill a strong and unanimous DO NOT PASS recommendation.

Thank you. I welcome questions from the committee.

**PROPOSED CHANGES  
to Senate Bill 2260**

Page 2, remove line 31

Page 3, remove lines 18 through 31

Page 4, remove lines 1 through 31

Page 5, remove lines 1 through 31

Page 6, remove lines 1 through 3

Renumber accordingly