

01/20/2023

HB 1333

Testimony in Opposition

Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Naomi Tabassum, and I am a resident in Fargo, ND. I have lived in Fargo since 2010, attended graduate school at NDSU, and own and operate a small business in Fargo. I am married, have two small children, and enjoy spending time in the community of Fargo as well as North Dakota at large.

I am a member of the LGBTQ+ community and enjoy engaging in my community events, which includes drag shows, featuring both drag kings and queens. I take offense to HB 1333 and strongly oppose it. To consider artistic performances at a drag show to be “prurient” in nature or “obscenity” is ignorant, absurd, and hateful. Drag shows are often family-friendly, and as a parent of a 1-year-old and 5-year-old, I happily take my children to drag shows. They are fun, creative, and in no way obscene. “Male or female impersonators” should not be included in a bill addressing nudity or “adult-oriented” entertainment. There is no nudity in drag shows. In fact, the performers are often wearing a lot more layers than usual. Think karaoke, but with more glitz and glam. It is harmless fun.

There is a strong push right now in this state to attack and criminalize people in the queer community. I hold you accountable to see the social and cultural attack the queer community is under by this bill and other bills focused on queer identities. We exist, and we are not going anywhere. Simply because we are different does not justify outlawing drag shows under the guise of “controlling obscenity”.