

Chairman Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Maura Ferguson and I am writing this testimony as a resident of ND and independently from my employer. My views do not represent my employer. I write to you today as a community organizer, a mother, and as someone who cares very much about the LGBTQIA+ community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this written testimony in regard to HB1333. I am writing in opposition to this bill as proposed, due to the inclusion of “male and female impersonators” and the implication that drag performances should be treated the same way as adult entertainment as outlined within the bill. The inclusion of drag performers in this bill shows a fundamental misunderstanding of drag as an art form and as a tool for community building.

Freedom of speech includes freedom of expression, and drag performances are absolutely included within those freedoms. Drag artists are not harming anyone, in fact, quite the opposite. Drag performances are frequently utilized in positive, beautiful ways to build community, which is sorely needed for members of our LGBTQIA+ community who often feel marginalized and isolated. Drag performances can show people of all ages the beauty of artistic expression and can help people know what it feels like to belong. This is deeply important for those who need it. I urge you to vote Do Not Pass on HB 1333.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and for your dedication to ALL people in the state of North Dakota, including our LGBTQIA+ community.

Maura Ferguson  
Grand Forks