

February 14, 2023

Dear Chairman Klemin and Committee members.

I graduated from a college in Minnesota in the 1970's. The "joke" when we were seniors looking for jobs was this: "Well, you can always end up in North Dakota." Snarky, huh?

I did "end up" in North Dakota and I was glad I did, because I met my husband! I wasn't into politics that much, but at the time I had a sense that North Dakota had a pretty good balance of ideas – we've had Democrat and Republican governors and I remember voting as an Independent. The political climate now has drastically changed for the worse, in my opinion.

I've read a lot of the testimony in favor of this bill and I heartily agree. As a white, cisgender, gray-haired old lady I have not been a victim of a hate crime, but many of my friends are LGBTQ+ people. I have seen the fear on their faces and hear of the extra precautions they take. One of my young friends said he was afraid to go anywhere west of Fargo in ND. This isn't paranoia – the hate speech, bullying, and lack of understanding, is real and it's ugly.

It's time to pass this hate crimes legislation!

I urge you to give a "DO PASS" recommendation to HB 1537.

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