

**House Judiciary Committee**  
**March 20th, 2023 HB 2231**  
**Testimony in Opposition**

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Dear Chair Klemins and the members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I urge a “Do Not Pass” on HB 2231.

- Conflicts with federal law under Title IX - [Department of Education](#).
- Conflicts with [Section 67.1-03-01-02](#) of the North Dakota Education and Standard Practice board: Code of Professional Conduct for Educators - Shall protect the student from conditions detrimental to learning or to physiological or psychological well-being.
- This bill deviates and in some cases would be considered ethical violations of the best standard of practice across multiple high level authorities within education relating to: [School Boards](#) | [Principals](#) | [School Counselors](#) | [Teachers](#) | [High School Associations](#) | [ACA Counselors](#) | [ND Social Workers](#)

I know this bill is concerned foremost with 1st Amendment rights. If this bill is passed, it will go to court. I have no doubt that North Dakota wants to participate within this legal fight at any cost.

I would like the committee to understand that I don't support compelled speech, but the evidence is unmistakable that using a child's preferred name and pronoun will make them feel safe, reduce depression, and suicidality. Misgendering a child will make them feel unsafe, depressed, and increase suicidality. It's a choice, I believe teachers should make.

I've been looking at this data for nearly ten years and the organizations above have for decades. Of the twenty bills that I have been tracking that will impact LGBTQ+ youth, I would wager this is the most directly harmful. Schools often serve as the one place of support and safety these kids get. When they don't feel safe at home or at school, they run away and when they're homeless they're at increased risk of trafficking, especially our indigenous trans youth.

If I may ask for mercy, this bill was introduced by Christopher Dodson with the intention of not making using pronouns mandatory. If possible, please take out Section 2, Subsection 4 and let queer kids still have someone in their life they can trust when their parents are hostile to them. If we could just give teachers a blanket exception to opt out of policies, at least we satisfy that goal without bringing undue harm to queer youth. Please.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state,  
Faye Seidler