

Senate Bill 2231

Chairman Klemin & Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Andrew Alexis Varvel.

I live in Bismarck.

My sex is male.

My preferred pronouns are rock/paper/scissors.¹

My xenogender identity² is Puff the Magic Dragon.³

I largely agree with Senate Bill 2231, but with two caveats.

On page two lines 8-9, please replace the words "if the policy is made in consultation with, and with the approval of," with "while fully informing".

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- 1 I have been inspired by a middle school student who, referenced in a TikTok video by a perplexed teacher from early August 2022, insisted that his personal pronouns were "banana and rock". So, when referring to me in the third person one can say, "When talking about paper, committee members should remember how rock can express scissors opinions in a playful manner."
 - 2 Xenogender is often described as a gender identity which is beyond conventional understanding. A xenogender could be metaphorically described as "hallucinogenic mushroom", "sandworm", or the color green.
 - 3 Please note that, as a little boy, I received a Christmas present from Santa Claus. I also received Christmas presents from the Tooth Fairy, the Easter Bunny, and the Wicked Witch of the West. It wasn't completely serious.

On page two lines 14-15, please replace the words "consulted with, and received approval from," with "fully informed".

This proposed change is because neither the school district nor the Century Code should become a party to family quarrels.

Requiring parental permission on pronouns treats gender identity with much more gravity than it deserves, as if it had deep religious significance. So, if banana says rock pronouns are banana and rock, then rock pronouns are banana and rock.

I do understand the need to protect the rights of teachers, so I generally support this bill. These speech protections for teachers should also apply to students who express unorthodox gender identification. Although parents need to be fully informed about what is going on in their children's lives, let's not go overboard.

Gender identity ought to have an element of playfulness to it. Let's keep the sanctimony out of it. As a society, we should not get overly concerned whenever adolescents of all ages act like smart alecks. An eye roll will often work better than getting mad.

School needs its occasional levity. It needs a place for goofiness.

With the changes I am suggesting in this testimony, I think the Legislature can pass Senate Bill 2231 while showing that it gets the joke, rather than becoming the butt of the joke.

Thank you.