

Testimony in opposition of HB 1474

Relating to vital statistic collection; and to amend and reenact section 1-01-49 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the definition of father, female, male, mother, and sex.

Senate Human Services Committee March 21, 2023

Senator Lee and committee members. My name is Stephen McDonough. I am providing testimony in opposition to HB 1474.

“If you are not measuring it, it is not important.” This is a saying that we used at the NDDoH when I worked there. It refers to the importance of data in evaluation of public health problems. One way for extremists to have the government ignore transgender people is to prohibit data gathering of those who are transgender.

I am a board certified pediatrician who worked in North Dakota for forty years, from 1980 to 2020. I worked at the NDDoH from 1985 to 2000 and served at times as the State Epidemiologist, AIDS/Project Director, Director of Maternal and Child Health and Chief Medical Officer. As a pediatrician, I provided primary care to LGBTQ adolescents and treated them with dignity and respect.

In 1989, the North Dakota Legislature passed AIDS/HIV legislation which balanced good public health and compassion and led our state to have the LOWEST HIV cumulative case rate in the United States for the next 30 years. We reached out to the LGBTQ community to reduce HIV transmission.

At that time there were extremist haters that called HIV the “Gay Plague” and would have been pleased if HIV wiped out the gay community. At the time, these haters were a very small minority and not a major component of a prominent political party.

We have a Legislature considering around 20 anti-transgender bills, all based on lies and misinformation. These terrible bills have given our state the reputation of being anti-science and one of intolerance and hate. Nearly 70 religious leaders and over 200 medical providers have recently published letters to the editor opposing these hateful bills.

The North Dakota Legislature should not be bullying transgender individuals or wishing that they go away or disappear. HB 1474 needs to be defeated.

Stephen McDonough MD