1-14-2023

Legislators,

I was disheartened when I learned of bill SB 2199, targeting the transgender and non-binary population in North Dakota. Two of my immediate family are transgender, so this bill directly affects them and our family. Not only that, but it directly affects those I work with every year.

How, in good conscience, can you say ND can uphold the Human Rights Act prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, **sex**, national origin, age, etc., when this bill tells me I can no longer refer to my family and friends with their preferred pronouns? Not only that, but that we will be fined in doing so? I watched my sibling struggle with gender dysphoria, depression, and suicidal tendencies for years. Now they are on the road to becoming a much happier human being, one who finally smiles and enjoys life. You cannot tell me that my sibling, who is hurting no one, is better off not existing.

As for testing based on “deoxyribonucleic acid” – DNA is not binary. Intersex and ambiguous physical traits exist. Biological sex is not as neat and tidy as Mendel’s pea experiments that are such common examples in Biology 101.

If you need a monetary illustration, I am employed by the State. I work and communicate with non-binary people daily. Our program actively tries to be as inclusive as possible, to make the opportunities we provide open to all. This bill would drive away many of the people that work with us every year. It is a slap in the face to those who joined us in years past, and will tarnish our program’s name in the industry moving forward.

I beseech you, please approach this community with love, respect, and understanding, rather than transphobic rhetoric, fear, and hatred. I love my family and friends. Please do not take them away from me, or me from them.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Barnes