Hello, my name is Katrina Jo Koesterman, President of Tristate Transgender, a support group serving North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota along the Red River Valley. In my years serving in this capacity, I have had the honor of watching dozens of transgender and non-binary individuals come into their identities, and part of that process is identifying with their new gender and pronouns. It's often a long and arduous process that takes a lot of trial and error, but the spark of joy that erupts on a person's face when they are first addressed authentically by their true name and pronouns is one of the greatest things I have the privilege of witnessing.

This bill aims to undo that moment in every action in every day of a trans person's life. With this bill, when a trans person tries to assert their correct gender in any setting where the state is involved, not only will they be told they are wrong, they will be threatened with a $1500 penalty. Furthermore, their allies won't be able to come to their defense lest they also be threatened by the same penalty. This bill attempts to erase an essential piece of the trans experience in North Dakota, and I can't seem to find a single reason why.

Furthermore, the bill makes absolutely no sense in its reference to a person's DNA. The bill states that a person's sex assigned at birth must be classified as male or female; however, there exist variables in chromosomes resulting in intersex conditions which this bill fails to address. Will intersex individuals be forced to be the only individuals using gender neutral pronouns, thus outing them as being part of a very rare portion of the population? This is a flagrant disregard for privacy and decency.

Finally, there appears to be no reason for this bill other than bigotry and hate. The only "problem" that the bill solves is preventing people from identifying as a gender other than the one assigned at birth. This bill specifically targets the transgender and non-binary population of North Dakota, and has no benefit to the state. It will only lead to further hate, increased suicidality among and violence towards our trans population, and will discourage members of the LGBTQ+ community from making this state their home. Please defeat this bill before it goes any further. I will gladly take questions.