

Only recently have I been able to begin the process of simply acknowledging that I will never see my daughter again, a transgender young adult who took her own life partly because of bills like this and the understanding that the people that write such bills would force her to fight for her very existence as a human being for her entire life; to her it was hopeless. This bill, if passed, would confirm that. So, having to write a letter in defense of her existence because the North Dakota legislation wants to erase it is abhorrent. But, she can no longer speak for herself and I am her mother, so here I am. And I am angry.

I've spent the day struggling for the words that would protect my family from the cruelty this bill represents. I've considered defending their humanity, telling stories that would help you see them as people, and offering statistics on suicide in relation to pronouns amongst the transgender community. But all of that seems pointless, much like this bill is, and I can only assume this committee has been made well aware of those things, already. Pronouns are unimportant to the cis-gender (those whose gender identity matches that of the sex assigned at birth) population. Most didn't give them a second thought until the trans community began asserting their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It makes you wonder what inspired a bill that would only impact the transgender community and in a harmful way. Is it fear? It certainly seems like that is a motivator here. But laws written out of fear have a tendency to be discriminatory and restrict freedoms, such as self determination, of specific individuals. Is it personal /religious belief? Most definitely. But since when has it ever been acceptable to impose an obvious personal /religious belief so blatantly on an entire population via law? And what is the end goal? What good thing is this bill supposedly going to accomplish other than acknowledging that yes, pronouns are important? So incredibly important that republicans feel the need for a law dictating who a person is and who they are not allowed to be recognized as; so important that my trans daughter would descend into painful silence when misgendered and withdraw, sometimes for days; so important that trans individuals have sought to end their own lives when their pronouns are ridiculed and refused.

It's difficult to see this bill as anything other than the legalization of bullying and the promotion of cruelty. The only purpose for it being to enable trampling on already marginalized human beings and to make it illegal to do otherwise. I've watched the hopelessness this bill has inspired in the people it would affect, directly and indirectly, and I'm left with only this – why? What is there to gain by making it legal to purposefully hurt another? This bill isn't so much hateful as it is ignorance personified and shameful, and useless to all but the bully. And because it's only end result will be the harm of North Dakota citizens it should be a do not pass.