Emily Miller
Testimony, SB 2199

Good morning, my name is Emily Miller and I am submitting this written testimony in opposition to SB 2199. Not only is it an egregious bill that targets a minority population in our state, it is effectively non-enforceable. This bill also sets a worrying precedent for the erasure of First Amendment rights by penalizing speech.

It is a common claim by the right side of the aisle that bills like this are protecting children, but that is simply not the case. According to the North Dakota Youth Risk Behavior Survey, (YRBS) 3.7% of our high school population identifies as transgender, which amounts to about 4,318 kids statewide, not including the middle school populations, which may bring the total up to 20,000. In addition to the school population, from personal experience as a young adult that has been involved with YouthWorks, I have noticed a general increase of trans people in the homeless/at-risk of homelessness population. Nationwide, according to the Trevor Project, youth transgender women and men make up about 38% of their respective transgender populations. LGBT Native Americans also report higher homelessness rates, at 44%.

Additionally, this bill would likely make the lives of the transgender youth population much harder than it already is, but will also affect adults here too. People that effectively pass as the other gender may be outed as result of this bill, resulting in a higher likelihood of them being targeted for violence. Instead of vilifying and targeting this vulnerable minority population, we should be treating them with compassion and understanding.

Besides the reasons I've stated above, I genuinely believe that this bill would be unenforceable. Who would take the money? Where would the money go? Who would make sure that this bill is being enforced? We have no answers to any of these questions, and it seems as if this bill was created to vilify, as I have said earlier. Not only is the bill a waste of time to pass, it is effectively penalizing speech and forcing it. My tax dollars want to be spent on public services that'll benefit the population, not hurt them. For the sake of ALL North Dakotans, disregard this bill, and pass ones that actually help. Thank you.