Dear Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My testimony is in opposition to Senate Bill 2199. I ask that you give this bill a Do Not Pass.

I am a pastor and a parent. Life is difficult for people with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, because there is widespread misinformation about this medical condition. I know people who have decided not to live, work, or attend school in North Dakota because they fear violence and discrimination, insighted by people who misunderstand their medical condition. I have sat with parents of teens who were diagnosed with gender dysphoria, who chose to complete suicide, instead of living in North Dakota. The pseudo-science presented in SB 2199 sets the state of North Dakota up as an agent in the violence done to people with diagnosed gender dysphoria.

If this bill were to pass, my parishioners will be faced with further emotional harm, sponsored by the state of North Dakota. My ability to provide pastoral care will be challenged. Just today I had conversations with parishioners who feel personally attacked by the existence of this bill. More of my parishioners will move out of North Dakota as a result of this bill.

The idea that there are only two definable genders and that those genders can be discerned by looking at a newborn's genitals is scientifically unsound. Using DNA to determine someone's gender is both costly and unreliable. If a student or public official declares their gender, asking for a sample of their DNA is asking to violate their privacy. Why would the government have a right to my DNA? Would you give your DNA?

Studies prove that using the preferred pronouns of a youth who is diagnosed with gender dysphoria greatly improves their chances of surviving to adulthood. No matter how you personally feel about this medical diagnosis, do not our states children have a right to live until adulthood? Forcing even the most compassionate teachers and public employees to use words that encourage self-harm goes against not just my sense of morality, but my faith.

I could go on. I am angry that this bill has been proposed. I am angry that it went past the hearing. I am angry that lawmakers think this is worth time and money and energy.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state

Best regards,

Rev. Michelle Webber