January 17, 2023

Regarding: Senate Bill 2199

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**

The reasons for my opposition to this bill includes:

1) As a pediatric and adult endocrinologist, this bill will impact the care of my patients.
    a. Disorders of sexual Development – I care for children born with hormones and genetic disorders that cause their external genitalia and internal organs to not match or be consistent with their DNA (intersex conditions). In some cases, their genetic gender may not be discovered until later childhood or even adolescence. Many of these kids may not even know that their genetic markers are not consistent with their external genitalia. Forcing misgendering of these children would cause trauma in ways that could be irreversible. This discussion or disclosure is had with these patients when they are older, able to understand the implications and in conjunction with behavioral health experts. Example of such conditions include:
        i. Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
        ii. Androgen insensitivity syndrome
        iii. Persistent Mullerian Structure Syndrome
    b. Gender dysphoria – Despite what some law makers and others might think about gender dysphoria, it is real, it is serious and when ignored can potentially lead to self-harm and suicide for those not supported. Even the simple act of using the desired pronouns can go a long way to help alleviate gender dysphoria in those experiencing it. Misgendering transgender persons with pronouns they do not deem appropriate can lead to mental anguish and exacerbation of the depression and dysphoria that can lead to self-harm actions. As a physician, my most important oath is to DO NOT HARM (Hippocratic Oath). Misgendering my transgender patients will directly conflict with my oath. I will not do harm to my patients, and I should not be penalized or criminalized for upholding my medical oath.
2) As a caring human, this bill will impact me personally.
    a. Misgendering my patients, friends, family and colleagues who identify with a gender different than their genetic markers is hurtful and goes against my moral standards
3) As a physician (endocrinologist) in North Dakota who cares for hundreds of transgender adolescents and adults, this unethical bill will cause my patients to seek care out of state. This will personally impact my practice. I am one of the only two pediatric endocrinologists in the state of North Dakota. There is a national shortage of pediatric endocrinologist in the country who care for children with diabetes, thyroid disorders, endocrine tumors, growth, development and other endocrine condition in children. The state of North Dakota cannot afford to lose providers seeking practices in other states with laws that do not impact their ability to care for patients ethically and based on standards of care.

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

Sincerely,

Luis Casas
Pediatric Endocrinologist