

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.

This bill impacts the people I care about, because you are trying to remove their very existence from our public forum. My friends are entitled to their own identities, not an identity that is forced upon them by an intrusive government.

This bill also seriously impacts North Dakota's standing in eyes of the world. I am North Dakota born and raised and I am also retired from the U.S. Foreign Service. Not only did I represent my country in several U.S. embassies and a multi-lateral diplomatic mission overseas. But I was often the only person from North Dakota my colleagues had ever met and I represented my home state proudly. Today, that would not be the case. I would be embarrassed by the small-minded, backward vision endorsed by this bill. The independent-thinking, forward-facing state that I grew up in doesn't seem to exist anymore.

Our state is currently in the process of recruitment because we have thousands of jobs that we cannot fill. We can't afford to alienate those who would bring new technology and skills by discriminating against the very identities of those who could contribute to our prosperity.

Trans and LGBTQ individuals are human beings and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Allowing them to live their lives hurts no one and the fact that this bill is an attempt to legislate them out of existence is abhorrent.

Best regards,

Cheryl Schaeffle