My name is Brittany Hagen, most of my family resides in North Dakota but I reside in Iowa. Even though I don't live in the state this is an issue that is close to home for me and people I love that do live in ND. The biggest way this affects me is that my baby sister lives in ND, and you're telling me you want to force my sister to identify as male after reflecting for years on her identity and finally learning to be comfortable expressing who she truly is. When you tell someone that a core part of who they are is wrong or delusional then force them to change it, that's dangerous. It can lead to lasting depression, substance abuse, self-hatred and even suicide. Now imagine that someone to be someone you love or care about like my sister or other family in ND. Luckily I hope my sister sees how much love and support she has around her but there are some in the community who don't have that same support.

Did you know that 82% of the transgender community have considered committing suicide? How about that 40% of the community has attempted to commit suicide? Suicide is the forth largest cause of death in teenagers globally each year. This suicide risk may be increased by discrimination trauma including but not limited to being fired or denied a job, facing harassment and bullying at school, becoming homeless or live in extreme poverty, be evicted or denied housing or access to a shelter, be denied access to critical medical care, be incarcerated or targeted by law enforcement, and finally face abuse and violence. Dr. Ian Colman, professor in the Faculty of Medicine School of Epidemiology and Public Health and the Norwegian Institute of Public Health in Oslo, Norway stated in MedicalNewsToday “While [ages 15-17] can be an exciting time, it is also very stressful, as adolescents experience a lot of peer pressure and can feel very isolated. This is especially true for those who express gender and sexuality in a nonconforming way.”

I could go on and on with studies like in '21 the 57+ fatal attacks against the transgender community, 37+ fatalities in '20, 25+ in '19, 22+ in '18, 21+ in '16, 21+ in '15, 13+ in '14, and 19+ in '13. However the Human Rights Campaign has already provided these numbers to you I'm sure. What I want pointed out is the + or when studies say at least because what about the fatalities that we don't know, the John/Jane Does. How about the suicides caused by discrimination trauma? I personally will hold ND accountable if anything happens to my baby sister. You have the opportunity to protect her rights and her future. Please do the right thing.