

Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am a clinical psychologist in the State of North Dakota. I am in opposition of Bill SB2199 for both professional and personal reasons. As a clinical psychologist, I specialize in the care of individuals of all walks of life, many who identify as transgender. Population estimates would suggest that there are over 20,000 transgender/gender diverse individuals living in the North Dakota who would be detrimentally impacted by this bill. There is no way to estimate the number of family and friends, and businesses, who would also be impacted.

Research shows that individuals experience sex, gender identity, and gender expression in a multitude of ways. There is no binary in many aspects of the human experience. We also know that transgender and gender diverse individuals are at an increased risk of suicide due to various stressors. We can only assume that passing of such a bill, that appears to erase their existence, liberties, and freedoms, would increase suicide rates significantly. This has been seen in other states who have passed legislation such as this.

In addition, as a mother of a transgender child, I see the fear and the hurt in my child's eyes each time his rights are threatened, or he is targeted with hatred. He does not understand why others care so deeply about his identity and how he expresses himself. These conversations are getting increasingly more difficult and heartbreaking and will continue to do so if bills such as SB2199 are passed.

In considering human rights, dignity, mental and physical health, and the overall wellness of a group of people, I urge you to vote NO on SB2199. Thank you for your support and feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Dena M. Wanner-Perry, PsyD, LP

Licensed Psychologist

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