

Dear Chair Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My testimony is in opposition to Senate Bill 2231. I ask that you give this a Do Not Pass.

I work in the FM area as a counselor and teacher, and I have worked with a variety of people that use a variety of pronouns. This bill's intention seems to police and marginalize transgender people, especially trans people who seek to be educated or who are educated. We are driving out qualified young people who want to live in North Dakota by writing bills like these, which has been expressed a variety of times.

Despite witnessing the heartache many young people have expressed by this year's bills, I care a lot about this bill because I am transgender person who is happy living with my two children. We used to live in North Dakota, and we loved it but as bills continued to be written like this, my family and I made the difficult decision to move to MN before my existence was made illegal. So many bills this year have tried to make made my everyday existed illegal. I am teacher who is also transgender, and if I was still working in North Dakota, I would lose my job that I earned by working hard getting good grades and attending a school dedicated to teaching teachers for six years ending with a master's degree. After a decade of working in the school my career would be struck down by 2 or 3 hours of work you're doing in this body. The only way I see a future for myself is by getting out of this state, which I still call home.

The bills that have been written by people with no input by transgender people have kicked out a person who would fly the North Dakota Flag every day from college until my move of this year. A person who would drive around Fargo during blizzards pulling vehicles that were stuck, a person who has help about three family move across the country to settle here in North Dakota, a person who knows firsthand about sandbagging flooding rivers and the need for drought relief for families out west within the same month. Someone who has organized marches against suicide and other violence. However, it's clear to me that I want to be here, and it's clear you don't want me to be just because my gender identity isn't a standard one.

As someone with a background in counseling and education, we've seen the rise the suicide rates rise when bills like this are put on amongst the trans community. We also see a rise of homicide toward transgender people. That being said I recently purposed a study amongst my peers and friends. I found that about 10% of non-transgender people that live within the state of North Dakota expressed anxiety and depression and the reason cited was the continuous targeting of their family, friends, spouses, teachers, and parents or also known as the transgender community.

Counselors have been over worked and underpaid while dealing with covid and now they have to deal with the fall out of this. I would rather spend my free time fishing or being with my family instead of over worked and underpaid dealing with impacts of North Dakota's legislation body on a group that of people that helped make up this great state. I am tired of sitting with amazing people watching them cry and fear their future because of bills like this. The trans community in North Dakota has done amazing things and we should be thanking them instead of trying to erase them.

Sincerely

Rebel Marie

