

Senate Bill #2260

68th Legislative Session

Senators: Paulson, Lemm, Wobbema

Representatives: Dyk, Heilman and Novak

I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill #2260. I am a parent of a transgender person here in the State of North Dakota. I am a very open-minded person and spoke to my children about life in very age appropriate terms and context but kids rarely share themselves completely no matter how close the parent and child relationship seems to be.

I thought my kids could tell me everything and wouldn't hesitate, but I am here to say I was wrong and kids don't feel parents are someone they can confide in. I have had that in my relationship with my parents, my relationship with my own children, to my surprise, and I hear that from my children's friends. Why would kids confide in their parents when the kids are raised to obey and listen to their parents because the parents were the boss, the authority figure, the one who ruled the home. That isn't what a friend is and so to believe parents have this bond to which their children would confide in them without holding back is a fallacy.

Kids don't like to disappoint their parents, cause trouble or have their parents come unglued towards them. Kids will keep secrets from their parents just to avoid a lecture, being punished or the feeling of letting down their parents in some odd way. Let's be honest, how many of you confided explicitly without holding anything back from your parents? None of you lied about who you were with, what you did when you were in high school? Most teens hold back details in their life but they then look to friends or a teacher, school counselor. The teacher, school counselor and friends would be safe to talk to because they wouldn't judge like parents do.

My child came out to me as transgender, and I admit I handle the news very well that night. After I calmed down, I realized I needed to put my child in front of a counselor ASAP. I am that kind of parent. Once I calm down, I go into action mode and immerse myself with the issue and learn about it. That way I can do what is best for my child. Which was counseling but it was also family counseling. That is where my husband and I learned that it was our lack of knowledge that is the issue, not my child being transgender. My child was born transgender. In utero her body formed first then her brain. The brain and body don't match each other so therefore she is transgender. MRI scans show that she has a female brain. Male and female brains are physically different and MRI scans can see the brain difference between male and female brains.

So, if a child knew that his/her parent would be very upset, explode at the news, then of course the child wouldn't tell the parent. However, the child should have someone who is "safe" to confide in. Just like in situations of abuse, dark thoughts, family troubles at home, kids are more apt to tell a counselor or teacher than walking up to the parent. Their home life might be very volatile so why would you take away the only "safe person" that child has? That isn't in the best interest of the child.

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Many parents make decisions that affect their child on the basis of how the parents' friends would react or fear of what the community or their church would think and say. That is awful and so self-serving, void of any concern and care of what the child is going through. I know of a situation where a single parent was told his teenager was transgender and that dad threw the child out of the house. Now that child would have no one to help them if this bill was passed. The child couldn't go to a teacher or counselor for help. Parents don't always do the right thing and sometimes the parent does more harm than good.

Parents who refuse to help their child who is transgender might end up with a child who runs away, indulges in drugs or alcohol to numb their pain or worse case scenario, the child commits suicide. What then? Was the parent still doing the best they could for the child? I made the decision very early on I was going to do what I could to help my child. I wanted a child who was happy, health physically and mentally and knew that my love didn't disappear because my child is transgender. Not every parent can do that. Not every parent can focus on the child and do the hard work. It's a lot easier to deny that the child is transgender, it is a lot easier to demand the child to confirm to what the parent wants and to ignore the pain and suffering the child is in because the parent is focusing only on themselves.

Parents don't educate themselves by conversing with doctors and or counselors who specialize in transgender. Religious clergy DO NOT know what transgender is either. Saying that God made you one way and that is it is what someone ignorant of the facts says. God also made the child who was born with a club foot, crossed eyes, all sorts of things that a doctor would fix. The difference here is that people can see what the issue is right away. Transgender kids wait until they can articulate how they see themselves in a mirror. That verbiage only comes with age.

North Dakota is not a state in which people are open minded or embrace change well. People here fear progress unless that progress adds to their bank account. School counselors are educated to help kids with all sorts of things and the counselors also have a better idea of what is going on in the school versus most parents. Kids are more likely to seek the help of someone whom they consider safe to talk to.

As a parent why would you remove this safe option from your child? Would you as a parent rather have your child run away or kill themselves because they felt life was hopeless and no one listens to them so why bother living? Is that the trade off parents in North Dakota want? Is that what this legislative body wants, is for parents to make horrific mistakes so their child suffers or dies? This bill isn't thinking of kids at all and what is best for them. This bill is focusing on eliminating options for transgender kids. This bill is discriminatory and does not take into consideration that the state isn't skilled counselors nor does the state know much if anything about transgender issues.

As a parent of a CIS child and a transgender child, I find this bill offensive. To try to shroud this bill as a parents right to govern their child while flimsy covering up the lines that specifically point to transgender kids. This bill doesn't help kids, it doesn't help parents either. This bill does help keep transgender kids from getting help that they need. It isolates the transgender child and escalates their level of emotional stress and pain.

The authors of this bill and many other anti-transgender bills are bullies that are picking on children in the State of North Dakota. It's easy to see that the legislature body has found a group that they have zeroed in on to eliminate and or erase from North Dakota. Very much like what Hitler tried to do with the Jews. This has nothing to do with helping transgender families but it is all about keeping North

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Dakota population at a certain way, to do away with anyone who is different and not like themselves. Again, that's what Hitler did and how did that work out? You can't erase people. People are who they were born as, it is that simple. A person can't be made transgender any more than a person can be made gay or be made heterosexual. That is all lies and myths that people say who have an agenda and want to spin a false narrative, so their audience buys their lies and stories.

Kids know their own selves. As parents, we need to listen to our kids. The state needs to stop thinking about keeping this state as it was in their mind 50 or 60 years ago. Transgender people were around then just like they have been around since time began. The state should focus on helping people who need help; those who have little to no voice such as the youth of this state, especially the ones who are marginalized. The CIS kids suicide rate is much smaller than those who are transgender. That's what you should be focusing on, helping to keep all kids alive.

I can say that the actions I took I now have a happy and healthy daughter. I also know that if I was the type of person who easily folds to what society or my community pressure dictates, I would most likely not have my daughter live today.

Stop illuminating choices and helpful options for transgender kids. The transgender kids don't deserve this; they didn't do anything to warrant your hateful bill nor your total lack of care and regard. They just want to be themselves as they see themselves, not anyone else. Their true authentic self.

Kristie Miller
Parent of Transgender