

Chairwoman Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Maura Ferguson and I am writing this testimony as a resident of ND and independently from my employer. My views do not represent my employer. I write to you today as a community organizer, a mother, and as someone who cares very much about the LGBTQIA+ community.

I am writing in opposition to SB 2260. This bill would place undue burden on our schools. There are many sections of this bill that are redundant, as parents already have access to educational records under FERPA. There are also sections of this bill that are extremely impractical - if parents need to consent in writing for every physical and mental health decision, would this mean that they'd need to sign off for every bandaid? Every time a teacher shares words of encouragement to cheer a student up to improve their mental well-being?

Additionally, as a mandated reporter I have concerns regarding the requirement of notifying parents when a 960 is filed. This is extremely vague and does not state who would be the one to notify in the event that a 960 is filed, which has the potential to no longer make the 960 report anonymous. Moreover, there are times that it would place a child in even greater danger if a caregiver were to be notified about a 960 filing and this bill does not seem to recognize that particular scenario.

Lastly, there are large sections of this bill that are discriminatory and rooted in homophobia and transphobia. That is morally and ethically wrong and should not be promoted by the ND legislature. LGBTQIA+ youth are some of our most vulnerable and we should do all we can to protect them.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote Do Not Pass SB 2260.

Sincerely,

Maura Ferguson, LMSW
Grand Forks