

Chairman Matthew Ruby
House Human Services Committee
Regarding HB 1144
January 27, 2025

Dear Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 1144. I respectfully urge you to issue a “Do Not Pass” recommendation, as this bill would cause significant harm to LGBTQIA+ students in our community.

First, asking for and correctly using someone’s pronouns is a fundamental act of respect for their gender identity. It fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment where all individuals can feel valued. Major professional psychological and psychiatric associations consistently emphasize the importance of inclusive language, which dramatically reduces rates of depression, social anxiety, suicidal ideation, and other negative mental health outcomes among transgender and nonbinary youth. Using the correct pronouns is a small gesture that has a profound impact, affirming and supporting LGBTQ+ individuals in ways that can save lives.

Second, all of us, including transgender people, care about safety in restrooms. Transgender individuals, like everyone else, use restrooms to do their business and then leave. Forcing transgender students to use restrooms that do not match their gender identity increases discrimination, hostility, and bullying. This is a direct barrier to their success in school. According to the American Medical Association, such practices compromise health, safety, and well-being, heightening stigma and leading to serious negative health outcomes. While private or separate restrooms can be an option, they are not always accessible and can create a sense of isolation. Every student deserves to feel safe, respected, and treated with dignity.

North Dakota’s students deserve better. Our state should strive to support all young people, empowering them to thrive rather than forcing them into situations that threaten their mental health, safety, and success. For these reasons, I urge you to stand against House Bill 1144 and issue a “Do Not Pass” recommendation. Thank you for your time, thoughtful consideration, and dedication to serving our state.

Sincerely,

Corinne Edgerton