

January 26, 2025

Chairman Ruby and members of North Dakota House Human Services Committee,

My name is Rachel Waldo, and I am writing to you today to implore you to oppose House Bill No. 1144 for the sake of our children.

North Dakota has a long and proud tradition based on personal freedom. As long as your behavior isn't hurting somebody, well who am I to shove my nose where it doesn't belong? This kind of legislation represents a distinct deviation from that philosophy, and frankly, this is a deviation with a body count.

We know how negatively this kind of legislation impacts our children. According to a study in the peer reviewed journal Nature Human Behavior, from 2018 to 2022, 48 anti-transgender laws were enacted in the U.S. across 19 different state governments. The study examined the causal relationship between these laws and suicide risk over this five-year time period, using national survey data collected from more than 61,000 transgender and nonbinary youth. Results concluded that, during this time period, anti-transgender laws significantly increased incidents of past-year suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth by as much as 72%.

The known risk to the lives of transgender youth is more important than the baseless accusation that the most marginalized group among us somehow poses a threat. We are better than this. We have more important issues in our state than focusing on regulating such an incredibly small portion of the population, especially when legislation like this could mean the loss of a child.

For the sake of everyone who remembers how hard those formative years can be, I urge you not to make them worse for our most vulnerable children. I pray that you vote nay and oppose HB 1144. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel Waldo