

Testimony in Opposition to HB1181

North Dakota House Human Services Committee
January 21, 2025

To Members of the Committee and their Chairperson,

My name, although not relevant, is sareli beltrán, and i am here today to strongly oppose HB1181. For me and many relatives existing on this land, this bill is not just about language—it is about the dignity, safety, and legal recognition of all North Dakotans, including **Two-Spirit**, transgender, and nonbinary neighbors, colleagues, and family members.

HB1181 proposal finds itself at **odds** with North Dakota's advertised values of freedom, community, and opportunity- sending a clear message that both the state's appeal to current and prospective residents is misconstrued and dishonest. Safety for all is not a priority to the leadership of this state if passed.

(Un) Welcoming Communities: Implementing HB1181 will foster an environment of exclusion, deterring potential residents and investors who seek accepting and diverse communities, contradicting the state's image of warmth and hospitality.

Attracting Top Talent: With workforce and labor challenges, goals to address workforce shortages by attracting diverse talent are going to be obstructed. HB1181 will discourage skilled professionals, particularly those who value inclusivity, from relocating and staying in North Dakota, thereby **hindering economic growth** and the state's talent acquisition objectives.

Unsafe: To current ND residents HB1181 sends a clear message that all of us do not belong, that our identities can be erased, and that our fundamental rights are debatable not protected. Bills like this embolden discrimination, increase barriers to healthcare, and worsen mental health outcomes, especially for communities who already face systemic inequities, increasing suicidal ideation and substance dependence rates.

North Dakota has a proud history of valuing hard work, community, and fairness. This bill does not reflect those values. Instead, it invites unnecessary **government** overreach into people's identities, creating legal ambiguities and potential conflicts with federal protections. More importantly, it threatens the well-being of North Dakotans who simply want to live their lives with dignity and respect.

i urge you to reject HB1181. Our communities deserve legislation that fosters inclusion, not exclusion. Your time is appreciated.

Ma Xipatinemi-may you be all well,

sareli beltrán