

Good morning chairman Ruby and Health and Human Service Committee members.  
My name is Mary Shelkey and I live in district 33.

I am submitting written testimony in Support of HB 1430 for the following reasons.

In reading the current rule that social workers are required to follow now that states, "it is an ethical violation for a social worker licensed by the board to engage in any practices or treatments that attempt to change or repair the sexual orientation or gender identity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning individuals", to me violates what a social workers job is.

Is it not their job to give ANY individual, no matter their gender identity, sexual preference or any other issue they are struggling with, ALL options no matter what so the patient THEMSELVES can make an informed decision? And WHY was it just these items that were added that would be considered an ethical violation to offer treatment for? To me it sounds like whoever wrote the new rule, and those that approved of it do not WANT these people to be helped!!

The way the current law is written, THAT is a violation as it is steering patients in a certain direction and telling them that they have no other options than to just live the way someone has told them they should or that they've seen on TV or many other ways the idea could have been put in their head. Maybe they just wanted to experiment for a while and now want help getting out of this lifestyle.

The current rule is written in a way that if a person living one of the stated preferences is having second thoughts or questioning if they really believe this lifestyle is for them and they seek the guidance of a social worker, the social worker would be in violation of "attempting to repair or change" this person's decision, if they gave them any guidance, resources or asked them questions to help the patient understand their decision, EVEN IF THEY THEMSELVES asked for the help. Does THIS sound reasonable??

I strongly urge you to vote in favor of HB 1430 to change this bill to a more ethical way of practice for ALL Social workers to do their job in the way they took an oath to do.

Thank you for your service of serving on the Health and Human Service Committee and for serving as a North Dakota Legislator! Thank you for your time and for allowing me to submit testimony in support of HB 1430!

Mary Shelkey