

In Opposition to House Bill No. 1150

House Industry Business and Labor Chair and Committee Members,

As a citizen of North Dakota, a business owner, and a devoted Christian I oppose HB 1150 for the following reasons:

It will hurt family businesses - After COVID, many businesses are struggling, especially the smaller family businesses. Sunday is when everybody does their shopping and it will hurt these businesses to force them to close for half of the busiest day of the week.

Religious freedom – I’m a devout Christian, but I know many people in North Dakota who are of other faiths. Do I think laws should be made to give preference to their religious practices? No, I don’t want their religion pressed on me by law and I don’t want my beliefs pressed on them by law.

The American Constitution - America became a great nation because of it’s founding principles contained in the Constitution. The Pilgrims and many of the other settlers of America had experienced religion being pushed upon them by law in other countries, and that was why many of them came to America because it offered freedom to each person to practice their religion according to the dictates of their conscience. No single religion was to be the religion of the state. The Founding Fathers were wise enough to put this as the very first amendment in the Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” They had seen first hand what the result would be if religious practices were mandated by law.

The Bible – Since this is a bill based on the Christian religion I think it is fitting to consider that the Bible nowhere mandates the keeping of Sunday as the Sabbath. History shows that this became an established tradition of the Christian religion several hundred years after Christ’s time. There are many Christians who still keep the Sabbath on Saturday, the seventh day of the week. This is actually commanded in the Bible; but I don’t believe laws should be made that everybody in North Dakota should stop working on Saturday, just because there are Christians who keep that as the Sabbath. The laws of the state should protect people’s ability to practice their religion, but not force everybody around them to practice it with them, under penalty of a class B misdemeanor. This is not the freedom of religion that the Founding Fathers of America fought for!

Something to note – Thousands of people from other states are hearing about this bill that is being considered in North Dakota. I live in ND but didn’t know about it until a friend in another state contacted me to ask if it was real. There are national influencers on social media that have found out about it and are opposed to it and they are spreading the news across the whole United States and even to other countries. So a lot of eyes are on North Dakota right now. I didn’t know if the North Dakota legislature was aware of this or not.

As a citizen and business owner in North Dakota I strongly encourage you to vote NO on this proposed bill.

Sincerely,  
Shawn Hoffman  
Wishek, ND