

## **HB 1493– Relating to the office of legal immigration**

February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025

I write in opposition of HB 1493 which would close the North Dakota State Office of Legal Immigration.

Having moved here from my native California, I have lived in North Dakota for over 30 years, and seen first hand how immigrants from other parts of the world have contributed to the essential workforce of this State.

Without nurses and CNA's from overseas who come here legally, our nursing homes would not be staffed and our elderly would not be cared for.

Without agricultural workers from other countries, our crops would not get harvested, the honey bee industry would collapse, and dairy cows would not get milked.

Those are the industries I have personally seen which are dependent on immigrant labor, and I am sure there are many others.

The State has a compelling interest in helping private employers, farmers and factor owners find and recruit willing workers from all sources – both within the borders of the US and beyond.

Legal immigrants contribute not just their labor, but their talents, their culture, their devotion and their love.

I lived in Wishek, ND, for 25 years, and came to appreciate the “Germans from Russia” cultural heritage so prominent in that community and surrounding ones.

I also recognize that new waves of immigration are already changing the character of that community, but that is only natural in the development of our State.

Rep. Nico Rios may have come from Chicago to find opportunity here, but his antisemitic and xenophobic attitudes he brought with him, are not welcome here in our State, nor are they helpful for the common good of old and new residents alike who seek to make it their home.

So please oppose HB 1493 and keep the welcome mat out for all people regardless of where they hail from.

Martin Toepke-Floyd, Jamestown, ND