

February 16, 2025

Dear Chair Klemin and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I urge a “Do Not Pass” on HCR 3013.

I am an ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ, which is a mainline Christian denomination with roots in the Congregational, Christian, German Reformed, and Evangelical Churches. As a denomination, the United Church of Christ has been officially supporting marriage equality for all people since 2005. For 20 years, my Christian denomination has been publicly asking the United States of America to officially recognize marriage equality for same gender loving couples. Boards within the United Church of Christ first began approving marriage equality from a theological perspective in 1996, almost 30 years ago.

We are not alone in this. The Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC) have supported same-sex marriage since 1968, when the denomination was founded. The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) began supporting marriage equality for same-sex couples in 1996. Reform Judaism has been supporting civil marriage for same-sex couples since 1996. The Alliance of Baptists adopted a statement supporting marriage equality for all citizens, including same-sex couples, in 2004. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association endorsed same-sex marriage in 2004. Humanistic Judaism publicly supported the legal recognition of same-sex marriage in 2004. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) welcomed marriage equality for same-sex unions in 2009. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) began campaigning for legal same-sex marriage in 2009. Conservative Judaism formally approved same-sex marriage in 2012 and they had been allowing the blessing of same-sex unions since 2006. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has supported marriage equality for same-gender couples since 2013. The Old Catholic Church began recognizing same-sex marriages in 2014. The Presbyterian Church (USA) voted to allow same-sex marriage in 2014. The Episcopal Church sanctioned same-sex marriages in 2015.

Same-sex unions were recognized in ancient Mesopotamia, ancient Greece, and ancient Rome, among other cultures. There is a longer history of same-sex couples being recognized than there is of them not being acknowledged. There is no “natural definition” of marriage. Most Biblical marriages were polygamous. Many historical marriages were contracts between families, sometimes without approval from the people being married. The definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman is not grounded in science, religion, or history.

Regardless of an individual’s personal beliefs, it is inappropriate for United States or the state of North Dakota to deny same-sex couples the right to marry.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state. I urge a “Do Not Pass” on HCR 3013 and “No” votes on the floor.

Peace,

Rev. Gretchen Deeg
Bismarck, ND