

Testimony in opposition to HCR 3020

My name is Amanda Burke, and I have been a resident of Grand Forks for 30 years. I am writing in strong opposition to this bill calling all of North Dakota to acknowledge the kingship of Christ. This opposition stems from multiple important tenets in our fundamental freedoms in this country.

We have, in this country, extraordinary and explicitly protected freedoms - including religious freedom. This bill has no purpose but to clearly favor Christianity against all other faiths. It claims that making this acknowledgement will grant us "great blessings" but I firmly believe that it will only serve to alienate the non-Christian portions of our population. I have had the blessing of living and working next to Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Pagan, and Atheist citizens of this fine state, and they *all* contribute to the strong sense of community that I have come to be proud of as a North Dakotan. I would be remiss to not speak out on their behalf.

The separation of church and state was not an accident in the founding of this nation - it is intentional and must be upheld as the first line of keeping the religious freedoms of all citizens safe. It is not only nationally promised, but in our own state constitution, which states: "The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference shall be forever guaranteed in this state" - and I fail to see how HCR 3020, a clear call for preference, honors that clear declaration.

While I understand that individual Representatives and Senators hold their own religious convictions, I urge you to remember that you represent *all* of your constituents, not just those you share a church with. I call upon you to uphold this pillar of freedom and reject this bill swiftly.

If, in fact, the state of North Dakota is an inseparable part of the American union and respects that the Constitution of the United States is, indeed, the supreme law of the land, then it is only right that we acknowledge that *there are no kings in this nation*. You may keep Christ as king in your heart for all your days, but such a resolution has absolutely no place in our state legislature.