

Sylvia Bull

Regarding House Continuing Resolution No. 3020

12 February 2025

To the members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on House Continuing Resolution 3020. I urge a strong NO vote on this continuing resolution which resolves that the state of North Dakota acknowledge the Kingship of Jesus Christ. As a Christian, and a local pastor in Bismarck, I acknowledge the authority of Jesus Christ and his teaching in my own life and in the life of our church community. However, Article 1, Section 3 of the North Dakota Constitution states that “the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination *or preference* shall be forever guaranteed in this state.” This continuing resolution clearly establishes a preference for the Christian religious tradition, thereby contradicting our state constitution. This preference for the Christian tradition above other religious traditions also has real potential to violate the free exercise of religion of non-Christian residents of North Dakota, as well as their liberty of conscience. An official recognition of and preference for Christianity in our government could easily lead, by inference, implication, or actual policy, to discrimination against non-Christians and/or preferential treatment for Christians. This is not the way to honor Christ, or to make disciples. Jesus’ invitation to discipleship is always that - invitational - never coercive or controlling.

In the book of Daniel, chapter 3, the Bible itself shows the dangers of the State enforcing religious beliefs and practices on minorities. When King Nebuchadnezzar ordered them to worship in a certain way that violated their conscience, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did what all people of conviction and integrity are called to do in such a situation, they stood up to the State and said, “No! No, you cannot and will not dictate my faith to me.”

As a person of faith, I say no, too. And I encourage you to say no with me. Say no to this preferential establishment of religion. Say no to this violation of the rights and free conscience of our neighbors. We can and must do better as North Dakotans.

Again, I urge you to vote NO on House Continuing Resolution 3020. Please direct your efforts to legislation that serves and benefits the lives of all North Dakotans, irrespective of faith tradition or belief.

In Christ,  
Rev. Sylvia Bull  
Bismarck