

Dear Chair Ruby and Committee Members,

My name is Samantha Beauchman, my husband and I were born and raised in this state and moved back to ND nearly 5 years ago to raise our family closer to home. I am writing this testimony as a mother, psychologist, and advocate for transgender and gender non-conforming children in the North Dakota public school system. As the mother of a gender non-conforming child, I know firsthand the emotional and physical impact that bathroom designation has on a child throughout the school day.

I feel compelled to preface this testimony by sharing that my child has been gender non-conforming since the young age of two—if you can believe it—and he has never wavered in his interests, his love for stereotypically “girly” things, or his fun and sweet personality. Now, at the age of 8, he is becoming more aware of his differences in a way that wasn’t as salient when he was younger and more naïve.

Recently, the issue of gender-specific bathrooms has become a pressing concern in our household and in conversations with my child’s educators. My child struggles with deciding which bathroom to use comfortably, to the point that he goes an entire school day without using the restroom. This part of his day causes significant distress, which is evident when we try to process, discuss, or find a solution. Although the school has graciously offered an alternative bathroom, he remains hesitant to use it. For him, the issue is not simply about using a restroom—it is about being forced to think about something that he otherwise does not have to confront throughout the rest of his day. Something as basic as using the restroom—something most of us take for granted—is likely the most distressing part of my young child’s day.

I have found no compelling evidence to justify legislation like HB 1144 in our public schools. Schools should have the discretion to support their students in ways that best promote their well-being. However, there is clear evidence—beyond my personal experience—showing that restrictive bathroom policies cause distress for transgender and gender non-conforming students. Even more concerning are the alarmingly high rates of mental health struggles and suicide among LGBTQ youth, as referenced in other testimonies. It pains me to think that my child’s mental health challenges could begin at such a young age due to restrictive policies like those imposed by HB 1144.

I believe we can and must do better to support all students, particularly our transgender children, in our schools. Therefore, I urge a **“DO NOT PASS”** on HB 1144.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Samantha Beauchman  
Valley City Resident