

Samantha K. Harrison

Regarding HB 1144

March 22nd, 2025

Chair Beard and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is Samantha Harrison, a current resident of Mandan in District 34. I am writing to you to urge a “Do Not Pass” recommendation and a “No” vote on HB 1540.

I have written lots of testimony this session. You have probably seen various testimonies that I’ve submitted speaking about my background as a teacher, an EMT, and a Public Health professional. I’ve had the privilege to dedicate my professional life to things that matter the most to me, and chief among those has been the education and medical care of children.

You can find the stats if you care to look for them, but I’m instead going to tell you that first-hand I have seen the positive effect that inclusion of transgender people has on both youth and adult mental health. I saw it as a student teacher and full-time teacher when a kid who wasn’t accepted found their place in my classroom and felt safe. I saw it when someone who was having a mental health crisis on the ambulance was told that we were there for them. I saw it with my dear, dear friend who finally started living her fullest and best life when she was finally able to accept herself and be accepted by others in her late 30’s.

I will also tell you that more of the children in our state will be put at risk of poor mental health if this bill is passed than are currently at risk due to shared handwashing stations. In my previous job at the state overseeing Emergency Medical Services for Children, it never got easier having to prepare EMS agencies in the state for pediatric suicide calls. It was never easier dealing with those calls myself when I was an EMT. I can tell you that bills like this will not help that—they will only make the problem worse.

Trans people are not a danger to you. They are not a danger to me. They are not a danger to children. They are trying to exist.

This bill is ridiculous, cruel, and a waste of time and money. I urge a “Do Not Pass” recommendation from the committee and a “No” vote on the floor on HB 1144.

Sincerely,

Samantha K. Harrison
District 34