

Dear members of the Education Committee

I respectfully ask you to give a DO NOT PASS to HB 1144

I simply do not understand the motivation behind banning gender neutral bathrooms in schools. Have you looked at the layout of gender-neutral bathrooms in our schools? They are comprised of fully-enclosed stalls that provide complete privacy and are open to a hallway. This setup **prevents bullying** because supervision of those spaces is much, much easier than in a traditional bathroom.

My son attends Minot North High School and he reports that bullying and illicit dealings are common in traditional bathrooms, where groups of kids are out of sight of teachers and can gang up on others. My son much prefers using the gender-neutral bathrooms that are available because he feels safe there. I have also heard this from parents of girls.

Traditional bathrooms are still available in our schools, in addition to the gender-neutral ones. Anyone who is more comfortable with a traditional bathroom can visit those. What is the harm in also making gender-neutral bathrooms available?

Why are legislators ignoring the realities of school safety? I can only conclude that this is maybe done out of spite to make life difficult for transgender students, because there is simply no logical reason to ban these types of bathrooms.

Additionally, HB 1144 is a wasteful, taxpayer-funded mandate. Many North Dakota schools have already adopted student-centered restrooms, just think of all the Kindergarten classrooms that have one bathroom inside to be used by all of the little ones.

If HB 1144 passes, schools will be forced into costly renovations at taxpayers' expense.

I urge you to prioritize student safety and fiscal responsibility by voting DO NOT PASS on HB 1144.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Deufel – District 40

Parent of a high-schooler who definitely prefers the gender-neutral bathrooms!