

## HB 1144

Shaydora Todd

In Opposition

Chairman and Committee Members,

My name is Shaydora Todd, and for the past nine years, I have previously worked closely with at-risk youth, including those facing mental health challenges and members of the LGBTQ+ community, within both residential and school settings. In my experience, I have witnessed the positive impact of gender-neutral bathrooms, even in environments with highly vulnerable or troubled students. There are many reasons that this bill should be opposed including the latter. Unfortunately, this bill does not remove the already horrible law in North Dakota, but we must not make it worse.

I strongly urge you to vote *Do Not Pass* on HB 1144 for the following reasons:

### **1. Safety Concerns**

This bill targets an already vulnerable population: transgender youth. In North Dakota, transgender youth make up just 1.7% of middle and high school students. Yet, this group faces disproportionately high rates of suicidality, bullying, and mental health challenges. Passing this bill will only further harm these young people by adding additional layers of discrimination and risk. To those who claim this bill is about protecting students' safety—where is the concern for the safety of trans youth, who are already at a heightened risk? These young people deserve our protection and empathy, not further marginalization (GLSEN, 2024).

### **2. Implementation Challenges**

This bill's practical impact will be costly and time-consuming for our schools, especially those already invested in gender-inclusive solutions like floor-to-ceiling stalls. Rather than making schools safer, this bill will unnecessarily burden school districts, staff, and students. It could lead to and enforce invasive procedures for transgender students and force staff into uncomfortable positions that complicate their ability to foster a supportive and safe learning environment (GLSEN, 2024).

### **3. The Broader Impact**

Considering the cost of finances and the emotional and mental toll on our students is crucial. We must ask ourselves: How can we justify taking steps that will cause harm to an already marginalized group to appease a more significant portion of the student

body? Transgender youth deserve the same level of safety, dignity, and respect as every other student.

## **Conclusion**

I urge you to consider the lives of the 1.7% of students directly impacted by this bill and the financial strain it places on our schools and taxpayers. (Seidler, 2021) Voting *Do Not Pass* on HB 1144 is a critical step in protecting all students, including transgender youth, and fostering an environment of inclusion and safety for everyone.

Thank you for your time and for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,  
Shaydora Todd

## References

GLSEN (n.d.). *4 Big Problems With Anti-Trans Bathroom Bills – and How You Can Help*. Retrieved February 1, 2025, from <https://www.glsen.org/blog/4-big-problems-anti-trans-bathroom-bills-and-how-you-can-help>

Seidler, F. (2021). *YRBS 2021 Complete LGBTQ+ Data Overview* [Data set]. Faye Seidler  
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