

My name is Cynthia Prescott, and I am a resident of Grand Forks, North Dakota. I also am a scholar of gender and author of two books on gender roles and identity. I oppose HB 1181, which falsely equates *sex* with *gender*.

*Sex* is defined biologically. Generations of scientists have recognized that biological sex is complicated and cannot be neatly divided into two distinct sexes, male and female.

*Gender* is a collection of cultural expectations or identifiers associated with someone's expected social roles. Cultural expectations surrounding gender expression vary across cultures and have changed over time. For example, a century ago, many Americans chose to dress their male babies and young children in the color pink because red was associated with masculinity. A pastel form of red was thus considered ideal for babies who would some day grow to be strong men. In contrast, today pink is closely associated for many Americans with femininity—as seen in the power of “Barbie” dolls and the recent *Barbie* movie. Should anyone be able to tell your son today that he needs to wear pink to be manly?

When schools or universities identify students by *gender*, they are indicating which set of gendered social expectations most closely align with that student's cultural identity. This is distinct from biological sex and should not be conflated. Not only is doing so imprecise and inaccurate, but it could cause significant emotional harm to an individual who does not align with that set of social norms.

I urge you to give a Do Not Pass recommendation for HB 1181.