

Chairman and members of the Senate Education Committee

Greetings Chairman and people of the committee.

My name is Abigail Kraft of Bismarck and I'm here to respectfully request that you give a Do Not Pass recommendation for HB 1181.

I present my testimony with a brief backstory: I am a lifelong Republican voter, I am a parent, I am Catholic, and I have called North Dakota home my entire life. I had long hidden this side of myself, for fear of someone trying to harm me or my family because of perceptions people obtain from the media. Outlets such as Fox News routinely cherry pick stories to paint transgender people in a very negative light. Over the last few years I learned that I do not need to live in fear, at least in our home state. So many of our fellow citizens, especially in Bismarck and Fargo, have shown the upmost respect to me, whether they have served me at an establishment, conversed with me at an event or just passed by me. Today is the most public I have ever been about myself outside of social media, I chose to testify on behalf of our fellow citizens, to stick up for them and hopefully influence our state government to make the right decision. I do not believe the state should be legislating infringements upon our people, nor should we live in fear of laws that pacify some people in a party base at our expense, simply because their perceptions are influenced by places like Fox News' fantastical stories that make people fearful of us.

There are approximately 3000 transgender people in North Dakota based on a Williams Institute study, and I ask, should we be changing our laws to shun 3000 of our fellow citizens? What about these wonderful 3000 people in our state? Don't they get a voice? We can list our height and weight on our state IDs as we wish, nobody weighs us or measures our height before printing out IDs but when it comes to gender, suddenly people will need to comply with partisan law or pay for a DNA test, again just to satisfy the party base for culture war points. As Republicans, we say we are the party of personal freedom, I believe this is an issue where we as North Dakotans need to come together for all our people and lead by example for the other states. We can show the rest of the country that North Dakota will not infringe on our citizens' rights, that we love and respect everybody who calls this place home, and it all begins with rejecting this bill.

The law as currently written is sufficient the way it is. Representative Olson from Baldwin just wants to comply with President Trump's ridiculous culture war crusade against transgender people at the expense of our own citizens, purely for political purposes. What will happen the next time a Democrat president is in office? The issue will likely go back the other way, like a pendulum in a grandfather clock, and at that time our law will be out of compliance once again. Instead, we should be leading by example and leaving our law the way it is. This amendment does nothing but pacify a party base at the expense of 3000+ people in our home and sews significant division and hatred throughout Legendary North Dakota. The law, as it is currently written, is in line with our deeply held values of respecting all our fellow North Dakota citizens.

Governor Armstrong himself said there is a difference between gender identity and biology. He also said this in a debate with candidate Merrill Piepkorn. Quote; "Dress however you want. Be who you want to be. This country is a fantastic, weird place, and I think it is great." If this petty

bill passes, you are going to be putting it on the back of Governor Armstrong to take a stand for the people of this state. Would you be comfortable making him either go back on his word to pacify a fraction of one party or will he stand up for all citizens of North Dakota and veto the bill? I think the choice is clear, that this bill should rightfully die in the Senate to prevent this from happening and to protect the rights of every North Dakotan.

Regardless of what happens with this potential change to our law, I hope my testimony can provide a starting point with our fellow citizens so we can all come together and have conversations about people and our differences, to learn more about our neighbors and how there is no reason to fear someone unlike themselves.

Thank you for your time,

Abigail Kraft

Bismarck – District 32