

Members of the Committee. I am writing in opposition to HB 1181. I remember when being a Republican meant we wanted the government to be involved only when absolutely necessary. It was not felt that the government needed to be our parent or to dictate every area of our life so we all complied with the thoughts and beliefs of those in power. Unfortunately, the party I grew up with and identified with has changed drastically. Now it appears that what the party wants is for everyone to think, believe and act according to the beliefs of those in power even if science and people's lived experiences do not support this view. This bill is one such example. Science has shown that gender assigned at birth based on the external anatomy is not always accurate. In fact, there are instances when parents have to decide what gender their child will be assigned. Insisting that there are only 2 distinct expressions of gender, denies what medical science has discovered in terms of the complexities of gender/sex. We know there are intersex variations caused by chromosomal abnormalities and that the influence of hormones at various stages of development impacts the development of primary and secondary sexual characteristics. Although we tend to want this to be a black and white issue, like most things in life, it is not. Yet here we are, denying the science, and continuing to marginalize people due to their biological differences. I am often left wondering why? How does it impact me if someone identifies differently from how they were assigned at birth? Does it change or affect my daily living, other than maybe me not understanding it? I would submit that it does not affect my life, but I know it affects the life of people this bill continues to marginalize. Their road is already difficult, I don't know why we would want to make it even more so. I would encourage the committee to acknowledge the science, step out of your preconceived ideas about gender, challenge yourself to really understand the experience of the people this bill will harm, and vote to support the people who are simply trying to live their best authentic life, by voting Do Not pass on HB 1181. Thank you for your time. Peggy Stenehjem-Titus Fargo, ND