

March 23rd, 2025

Dear Chairman Ruby and members of the House Human Services Committee,

My name is Karen Eriksmoen, and I live in Fargo, District 11. I am writing in opposition to HB 1181, relating to gender usage in the North Dakota Century Code and state records.

There is no clarification needed, as this bill states. HB 1181 is discriminatory and punitive to those who have realized that their birth gender does not fit who they really are.

A family friend realized that the tremendous struggle they experienced as a child, adolescent and teen was because they were trying to live as their gender identified them at birth. The self-destruction and turmoil they experienced was confusing, chaotic and life threatening. As she/her now identifies as he/him, life has become fulfilling and joyous, and self-acceptance has come to them. For this young person to have to answer to a pronoun that is no longer their identity would be demeaning and discriminating. I cannot express the pain this would cause a person who has found their identity to be different from their birth gender.

What purpose is there to decide that there are only two genders, and a person must be described only in those terms? How then do we honor all people, when some are transgender, non-binary, and gender-fluid in their personal identity? Who am I to decide how another person identifies their own sexuality and what pronouns can be used? Why would we want to make people feel that North Dakota is not a place they can call home by insisting that we use only birth-gender identifying pronouns in our state? This bill is harmful and destructive.

I urge you to reject HB 1181 with a Do Not Pass and instead promote a North Dakota that supports all individuals and is free of discrimination.

Thank you for your time and attention to my concerns.

Karen Eriksmoen  
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