

Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Kimberly Hurst and I reside in District 1. I am asking that you please render a do pass on Senate Bill 2105.

I am a mother of four children that have been previously enrolled in North Dakota public education. It was nearly three years ago when I learned about the excessive amount of surveys the students of our school district participate in; whether it was a survey from the school, a third party or the state surveys. From this array, it was the North Dakota state Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) that startled me the most in regard to the obscene questions that our North Dakota students are being asked to answer. I would like to read some of these questions for you to understand what I am referring to, but before I do I would like to reference that according to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, both the YRBS and the Student Engagement survey that DPI administers are voluntary with no funding associated with participation.

I would like to remind you this survey is delivered to children as young as 12 years old; children who are of tender age. The questions are sensitive topics that I do believe should be discussed at some point with our children; however, these discussions should take place at home with a parent or guardian. Delicate subjects such as, "Have you ever had sexual intercourse?", or "The *last time* you had sexual intercourse, did you or your partner use a

condom?”, or other sexual behavior questions asking them if they are transgender. Furthermore, there are an additional 16 questions that relate to smoking, alcohol, cocaine and prescription abuse that these tender aged children are being asked to answer. Without parental guidance, a child may struggle to navigate these fragile topics, potentially leading them to question if they should be engaging in such activities at their age if they are not currently doing so. Especially in today’s world, these topics of conversation can be necessary but that should be at the discretion of the parent or guardian of when the time is appropriate.

The high school Youth Risk Behavior Survey contains 99 questions and many of which are also obscene. Questions like, “During the last 3 months, how many people did you have sexual intercourse with?” and “Did you drink alcohol or use drugs before you had sexual intercourse the *last time*?” Perhaps you might consider these questions a little more age appropriate considering high school students are developing into young adults. Contrary to this belief, I would like to pose the question, would we ask these same obscene questions to adults in a workplace? If an employer administered a survey to their employees with sexual behavior questions it would be grounds for sexual harassment. So why is this okay for minors, tender aged children, to answer these kinds of questions in school without parental consent? When my children attended public school I was absolutely unaware they were being given this survey. I did not know these sensitive topics were being asked of

my children to answer; had I known, I would've rightfully opted them out so I could have these conversations one on one with them at home. As a parent, I trusted our public school system to provide academically sound education to my children; so it remains unclear to me why the state of North Dakota or the federal government needs to know anything about my children's sexual behaviors and how exactly does this relate to their academic proficiency in school. It's likely I will never agree or understand, but this proposed legislation safeguards these vulnerable conversations for the parents to have at home with their child.

I am a strong advocate for this bill, with emphasis on line item number three, requiring the parent or guardian to review a copy of this survey and authorize in writing that their student may participate. This not only highlights the importance of parental awareness of the survey but also encourages parents to engage in discussions at home after reading this survey. I urge you to support the passing of Senate Bill 2105. Thank you for your consideration on this important matter and for your service to the state of North Dakota. I stand for questions.

Kimberly Hurst