

Regarding HB 1430

Dear Chair Lee and members of the Human Services committee,

My name is Joseph Melancon. While not a citizen of North Dakota, but rather of Minnesota, I've lived, worked, and received education in Grand Forks for the past two years and six months and desire continue to do so. For myself and other LGBTQ individuals within the North Dakota University System who have chosen this state as home in the process of seeking postsecondary education, I urge that this bill, HB 1430, be given a DO NOT pass.

While this bill posits that it does not seek to make conversion therapy illegal, this claim is directly undermined by a parent or legal guardian's ability to consent to booking their child "therapy" that seeks to correct sexuality or gender to be in line "with the individual's personal or spiritual beliefs".

Simply put, in my reading of this contradiction, this bill only seeks to allow conversion therapy, just under any other name. I do not see any reason for this deception other than to sidestep years of research showing that conversion therapy only harms the youth subjected to it. By passing this bill, North Dakota children would be vulnerable to a practice that serves only to instill long-lasting self loathing, shame, and trauma about characteristics deeply engrained into their essence.

Again, I urge that this bill be given a DO NOT pass.

Many thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Melancon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "M".

Joseph Melancon

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