

CONCERNED
WOMEN *for* AMERICA
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

January 29, 2025
Senate Judiciary Committee
Testimony in Opposition of SB 2264

Chairwoman Diane Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am Linda Thorson, State Director for Concerned Women for America (CWA) of North Dakota, testifying in opposition to [SB 2264](#). As our state's largest public policy women's organization, we strongly oppose the bill's provisions regarding the redefinition of marriage.

North Dakota Century Code defines marriage in section [14-03-01](#):

“What constitutes marriage – Spouse defined. Marriage is a personal relation arising out of a civil contract between one man and one woman to which the consent of the parties is essential. The marriage relation may be entered into, maintained, annulled, or dissolved only as provided by law. A spouse refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband, or a wife married to each other.”

SB 2264 contains amendments in thirty-five different sections of the of the 14-03-01 Marriage Contract, with changes made to remove the words, “wife, husband, man, or woman” and replace them with “spouse” or “individual.” This bill is harmful to promoting healthy family units and a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Concerned Women for America of North Dakota, testifying for Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee, defends marriage as God intended, as we know this leads to healthy family units. Marriage sanctifies those in the union in a unique way that God has intentionally and purposefully created, through the commitment of one woman and one man.

- Redefining marriage rejects the truth that men and women are complementary and that reproduction depends on both a woman and a man.
- Children have a right to both a mother and a father, as God intended. It is important that government policies support and encourage the norms of marriage – monogamy and permanence.ⁱ

Although God can restore and redeem all situations, it is not hard to see the problems that often arise in homes that lack a mother or father. Each provides an irreplaceable and important role in a child's life to have the optimal environment to flourish.

Former U.S. Sen. Barack Obama (D-Illinois) acknowledged the harms that befall not only children but society when fathers are missing from the home in an address given to the Apostolic Church

of God in Chicago on Father's Day in 2008, saying, "We know the statistics — that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime; nine times more likely to drop out of schools and 20 times more likely to end up in prison. They are more likely to have behavioral problems or run away from home or become teenage parents themselves. And the foundations of our community are weaker because of it."ⁱⁱ

In an essay, 'We Need Fathers to Step Up', dated June 16, 2011, President Barack Obama recognized the importance of fathers and the effects of growing up without one in his life. See the *Parade* magazine excerpt below:

"In many ways, I came to understand the importance of fatherhood through its absence — both in my life and in the lives of others. I came to understand that the hole a man leaves when he abandons his responsibility to his children is one that no government can fill. We can do everything possible to provide good jobs and good schools and safe streets for our kids, but it will never be enough to fully make up the difference."ⁱⁱⁱ

Promoting marriage as defined in our state century code does not ban any type of relationship: Adults are free to make choices about their relationships, and they do not need government sanction or license to do so. North Dakota citizens have the freedom to live as they choose, but no one has a right to redefine marriage for everyone else.

Vote "Do Not Pass" on SB 2264.

ⁱ Anderson, Ryan Ph.D, (2013), Report: Marriage, What it is, Why it Matters, And the Consequences of Redefining it. The Heritage Foundation

ⁱⁱ [Text of Obama's fatherhood speech - POLITICO](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Barack Obama: 'We Need Fathers To Step Up' - Parade](#)