

Tuesday January 28, 2025

Dear Chair Larson, Vice Chair Paulson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Ann Fritz and I live and work in Bismarck (District 7). I strongly support Senate Bill 2264, which modernizes North Dakota's marriage laws to recognize marriage as a civil contract between two individuals. By updating terminology to use gender-neutral terms like "spouse" and "individuals," this bill ensures our state laws align with federal protections for all marriages and affirms the dignity of all married couples. More importantly, the bill updates language to define mutual rights and responsibilities, property and financial matters, and makes language consistent across the statutory framework.

Marriage, whether a couple is married in a church by clergy or in a courthouse by a judge, is a deeply personal commitment, and everyone deserves the right to have their union recognized and respected under the law. Senate Bill 2264 strengthens this principle by removing outdated language. It reflects our shared values of fairness, equality, and respect for all individuals and families in North Dakota. I urge the Committee to give this bill a Do Pass, demonstrating North Dakota's commitment to ensuring fairness under the law for all couples.

I appreciate your careful consideration of this bill and the very deeply heartfelt testimony presented. I am also grateful for your time spent considering all bills that are brought before this committee during this legislative session.

Sincerely,
Ann Fritz