

Regarding HCR 3013

Dear Chair Larson and members of the Judiciary 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, HCR 3013, be given a DO NOT pass.

Many of this bill's supporters argue that federal recognition of same-sex marriage, enacted as a result of Obergefell v. Hodges in 2015, runs counter to the teachings of particular religions or to "natural law". Addressing the first argument, I'd like to assert that while individuals are granted the right to freely follow any religion of their choosing by the first amendment to the United States constitution, individuals are conversely free to abstain from engaging with religion. Thus, to legislate based upon interpretations of morals posited by a given religious text directly violates our country's constitution.

Regarding the second argument provided, not only does claiming that homosexuality runs counter to "natural law" undermine the fact that homosexuality has been observed in hundreds of species across the globe, it also carries an implication that marriage must only serve as a mechanism to subsidize procreation. If we dictate that marriage is strictly for the act of procreation and not for the union of individuals in a romantic relationship, what precedent does this set for heterosexual relationships that do not bear offspring? If either party within a monogamous relationship is infertile, do they have the right to marry? And what of men who have had a vasectomy, or women who are post-menopause? To this, I argue that restricting one form of marriage between consenting adults based upon a lack of ability to procreate sets precedent to prohibit any marriages that do not bear children, a precedent that affects all citizens of the United States, queer or otherwise.

In closing, I'd like to ask that this bill be given a DO NOT pass, not only due to many arguments being born from interpretation of religious text, a violation of first-amendment rights, but also due to the precedent it would set for any other marriages that do not bear children.

Many thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Melancon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Joseph Melancon

2025-03-09

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