

March 10, 2025

North Dakota Legislature
State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Good morning,

I am writing due to my growing concern over House Concurrent Resolution No. 3013. I am hoping those who claim to represent the residents of North Dakota actually read this letter, though I fear it will be ignored in the name of doing what is “right” by one’s religion, rather than daring to uphold the Constitution, to which you all took an oath.

When I first learned our legislature was preoccupied with attacking the legitimacy of gay marriage in our state rather than focusing on real issues that face North Dakotans every day, I thought it was sponsored by the minority and it would ultimately fail—because the North Dakota I thought I knew was better than this. Then, when I learned the resolution passed in the House and is now on its way to the Senate, I was utterly appalled and disgusted. Not only is it unethical and immoral to attack our LGBTQ neighbors and friends in this way, it is a waste of resources, time, and taxpayer funds. Our legislature only meets once every two years. The majority of North Dakotans would prefer you take your limited time at the capital to improve the lives of the working middle class, not take rights away from people who have done nothing to deserve such hatred and bigotry.

I would like to address the arguments Mr. Tveit makes in support of this resolution. He specifically argues marriage should be defined as between one man and one woman because that is how procreation occurs. My first question (of many) is, does Mr. Tveit genuinely believe that if gay marriage is not lawful in North Dakota (or the United States for that matter) that homosexual individuals will feel they have no other choice than to marry someone of the opposite sex and procreate? If so, that is ludicrous! Additionally, what about heterosexual couples who cannot have children, or choose not to have children? Are their marriages less legitimate than those who have children?

Mr. Tveit also seems to emphasize the importance of people having children in order to successfully sustain a country. What about all the children in foster care waiting to be adopted? Isn’t it also important for a country to promote stable homes for those children? And that’s not even mentioning the number of lesbian and gay couples who seek sperm donation and surrogacy as a means to have and raise children.

Finally, Mr. Tveit said, “If same-sex couples desire a collaborative union of a sort, or a legal bonding, they must call it anything but marriage.” This is exactly what I would expect someone who does not understand the law to say.

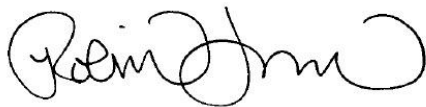
Mr. Tveit, since you seem confused, let me explain something. The term “marriage” is a legal term of art, which has widespread legal implications, not only on a state level, but also on a

federal level. To require same sex couples to “call it anything but marriage” would prevent those couples from taking advantage of certain tax benefits and inheritance rights of which heterosexual couples get to enjoy. In order for same sex couples to then benefit from these state and federal advantages of marriage, the “new term” for same-sex marriage would need to be added to tax laws, probate laws, and other applicable statutes. This is the problem with your so called “solution.” It creates more “problems” than it solves—that is to say, same-sex marriage creates no problem for anyone other than for people who are homophobic.

That leads me to my next question, Mr. Tveit, why “must” the state or federal government call a union between a same-sex couple something other than marriage? What do your neighbors’ same sex marriages take away from your heterosexual marriage? You know you and your colleagues have not brought this resolution out of genuine concern or care for the people of North Dakota. You want to show same-sex couples that you are “better” than them, and they are not welcome here. But I, and many other North Dakotans, are here to tell you, your hatred has no place here, least of all in our government.

Allowing same sex marriage in North Dakota, and in the United States, is a right so basic and fundamental that it should be protected and celebrated. I hope the members of the Senate will do the right thing and protect *all* North Dakotans by not passing House Concurrent Resolution 3013. These attacks on marginalized communities has to stop. North Dakota is better than this.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin Johansen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Robin Johansen
Fargo, ND 58104