

This proposed resolution sends an unfortunate message that that North Dakota, given the opportunity, would not honor marriage equality that was established in the United States based on the existing ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges (2015). I know proud North Dakota couples whose marriage status would not fit the prescribed type of unions that would be recognized if the United States Supreme Court overturn this case. They have chosen to make North Dakota their home and to raise families in our state. By voting in support of this resolution, I believe ND legislators are misrepresenting their constituents who trust them to advocate for their rights. In addition to the infringed upon rights that might occur by such an overturn, this resolution also has the potential to directly impact the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ residents. There are studies that have tied mental health and wellbeing to perceived acceptance and support of members of these communities. In totality, I am concerned that this resolution, should it move forward and incite action by the United States Supreme Court, will cause direct harm to North Dakotans. Despite populist calls for such actions, many states have made considerable progress in advancing civil rights. I worry that North Dakota will take a step backward by passing this resolution; it would send a message that not all individuals are welcome or appreciated in our state. That is not the "North Dakota Nice" that I have come to know as a North Dakotan.

I hope that members of the Senate will consider this resolution and the implications it carries thoughtfully. I would further encourage legislators and committee members who are on the fence with their vote to reflect on the comments shared by House members who admitted they would have voted another way, given more opportunity to reflect on the resolution. I appreciate their willingness to acknowledge this change of stance publicly when others might not have risked the political capital to do so.