

I'm writing to express my strong opposition to HCR3013. I find that this was even brought up to be completely appalling. What will the ND Legislature decide to go after next session – interracial marriage? Women's voting rights? Despicable!

I was born and raised in the Bismarck area, graduated from Century High School, attended BSC and moved to MN to finish school because ND doesn't offer a bachelor's degree in the field I was pursuing. I ended up staying here after graduation.

I was always taught to treat others the way I would like to be treated and that I was no better than anyone else. I didn't even realize this was an issue until Representatives Tveit, K. Anderson, Morton, S. Olson, Rohr, Henderson, Hoverson, and Senators Clemens, Enget, Lemm, Magrum, Weston threw it into the ring of public consciousness. What must it be like to have so much hate in your heart for people you don't even know to take away something that isn't even affecting you personally?

My mom dated a boy when she was a sophomore in high school for about 6 months, they broke up but stayed friends. The night of her high school graduation from CHS in 1992, he called her and came out to her as homosexual. She was surprised, but it didn't bother her, and she thanked him for trusting her. He said that she was the first person he told, because she was the most open-minded person he knew. She still considers that to be one heck of a compliment and she's in her 50's now. As the years have gone by, she's gained a lot of special friendships with all kinds of people of both sexes and different sexual orientations. None of that matters because they're all good people. She loves them all. My grandparents are in their 70's, they have no issues with the LGBTQ+ community either. Again, treat others the way you'd like to be treated, mind your manners, and mind your own business. I have friends across all walks of life and I'm grateful for the diversity and the ability to see things from the point of view of other people.

Yes, some people choose to get married for religious reasons, some for practical reasons – hopefully all for love as well. But whether or not there's church involved, there's definitely a legal process too. You can have a marriage without the church, but you can't have one without a piece of paper from the state. As far as I'm concerned, the ones that are gay have just as much right to marry the person they love as anyone else does. Straight people are not the only ones that deserve the legal protections that marriage provides.

Same-sex couples give back to our communities just as much as anyone else. They have families, extended families, they are business owners, buy homes, pay taxes, shop, fundraise, volunteer. Why tell them that ND doesn't want them? That's a bad message to send.