

## **Testimonial in Opposition to HCR 3013**

By: Heidi Ward

Dickinson, North Dakota

My name is Heidi Ward, and I am a loving North Dakotan, a proud wife, a mother, and an active member of my community. I am also an Army veteran who served in Iraq and was awarded a Combat Action Badge. I served my country with honor, fighting to defend the freedoms and rights that make America the land of opportunity for all. Now, I am asking my state legislators to stand up for my rights, my family, and the principles I fought to protect.

My wife, Erin, and I have built a life together in Dickinson, where we have lived, worked, and raised our family with the same values as any other North Dakota family—love, commitment, hard work, and responsibility. We have a 16-year-old son, Lucas, who is an outstanding student. Two years ago, he won National History Day and had his project displayed at the National History Museum in Washington, DC. He is bright, driven, and growing into a young man we are incredibly proud of. In just a few months, we will be welcoming our second son, Noah, into the world. Our family is thriving, contributing to society, and living the American dream—just as we should be able to.

HCR 3013 is a direct threat to my family, our legal protections, and our fundamental rights. If this resolution moves forward and ultimately leads to the repeal of marriage equality, it could dissolve my marriage and strip away the legal recognition that protects my wife, my children, and me. The consequences of such an action would be catastrophic, not just for my family but for thousands of other families like ours in North Dakota.

What would this mean for us? It could mean that my wife and I are no longer legally recognized as spouses, impacting everything from hospital visitation rights to inheritance laws, to health insurance coverage, to parental rights over our children. It could throw our lives into legal uncertainty, forcing us to fight in court for basic rights that opposite-sex couples take for granted.

Beyond the legal and financial ramifications, this resolution sends a cruel message that families like mine are less valid, less deserving, and less real. That message does not reflect the values of North Dakota—values of family, community, and fairness.

I have proudly served my country and continue to serve my community. Erin and I have lived here for close to a decade. We pay our taxes. We support our local businesses. We cheer on our hometown teams. We work hard to make our community a better place. We are not a threat to anyone. We are simply a family, like any other, who want to raise our children in a safe, stable, and loving home.

HCR 3013 is not just about policy—it is about people. It is about real families like mine who are being used as political pawns. I urge you to reject this harmful resolution and stand for fairness, equality, and the freedom for all families to live without fear of losing their fundamental rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Heidi Ward**

Dickinson, North Dakota

