

## **Testimony in Opposition to HCR 3013**

**Kylie A. Thurber, District 41**

**Senate Judiciary Committee**

**March 11, 2025**

Dear members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I strongly urge a DO NOT pass on HRC 3013.

Before I state my opinion and offer my own personal story, I do want to set the stage a bit. According to the NDLegis.gov website, the number of testimonies that have been received for both committees is at 162 (163 if you include mine) as of this evening on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Out of 163 testimonies, only 14 of them are in favor of this resolution. Out of those 14, three of those testimonies were from people and organizations that do not reside in this state. That means there are only 11 testimonies in favor of this resolution, and do not accurately reflect the state of North Dakota.

If we exclude the testimonies that are provided from people or organizations that are out of state, there are about ~145 testimonies in opposition to this resolution. That is an incredible turnout in comparison to those who are in favor. As state legislators, you are supposed to represent your constituents. Your constituents are demanding a DO NOT pass.

Nearly every testimony that is in favor of this resolution has referred back to the Biblical definition of marriage – one man and one woman as “God intended”. Representative Bill Tveit really set the stage when he opened the House Judiciary Hearing with his testimony in favor of this resolution as he quoted Genesis 2:20-25 NIV while breathing like a midwestern Nosferatu. There is also a testimony riddled with biblical verses, and another testimony that states, “Make America Biblical Again!!!!”.

What happened to the concept of separation of church and state? The phrase “separation of church and state” can be traced back to Thomas Jefferson’s letter to the Danbury Baptist Association in 1802 in which he states that the American people “...declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church and State”. This is a fundamental principle promised in the Constitution that ensures all people (religious or not) are treated the same.

In fact, the Constitution only refers to religion twice: in the First Amendment, which bars laws ‘respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ and in Article VI, which prohibits ‘religious tests’ for public office. Both of these provisions are evidence that the country was not founded as officially Christian” (Americans United; [www.au.org](http://www.au.org)).

Many of the sponsors for this bill are proudly involved in their church and religious communities. This information is listed within their own biographies for Rep. Tveit, Sen. Enget, Rep. Hoverson, Sen. Lemm, and Rep. Olson. It seems that they have some inherent biases or maybe conflict of interests that should have been left outside of the legislative assembly, and this is not the only anti-LGBTQ+ bill that has been introduced during this session (that they have also sponsored).

Now, who am I and why does my opinion or testimony matter? To whomever it may concern, I am a young woman from the east coast who decided to move to North Dakota for a job and for the love of my life. I work at a state institution, and I am not speaking on behalf of my institution, but as a constituent in District 41. I love the work that I do, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to move to Fargo which has provided me a safe city and a lower cost of living so that I could actually be with my partner of nearly 7 years.

I am actively looking to leave this state due to the politics here. This resolution, the behaviors and rhetoric I witnessed during the first committee hearing, and the other testimonies in favor of this resolution have all contributed to my extreme desire to leave. I have LGBTQ colleagues who are leaving, have already left, or are looking to leave this state as soon as possible because of the increase in Christian Nationalist ideals and policies. We are people who serve the communities in this state. The work we do matters, and we just want to feel like who we are as people matters. If people are looking to leave this state, you can sure as hell bet that people will avoid moving here as well.

As a lesbian in North Dakota, I do not feel welcomed, or that my life or my love matters. Why is *love* even considered a sin? Do you know what it's like to have your friends and your family look you in the eyes and tell you that they "love the sinner but hate the sin"? For them to tell you that you do not deserve the same rights as everyone else because of *who* you love? It's devastating, and heartbreaking. I try really hard to be a good person, extend empathy whenever possible, and continue to do my job that helps other people. I just want to live my life with my partner without being judged, scrutinized, or discriminated against.

While this resolution will not have an immediate impact (or potentially any impact on the Supreme Court if passed), it *is* showing constituents what the priorities of the 69<sup>th</sup> legislative assembly are. It is showing everyone that the state of North Dakota is a state full of bigoted and hateful people when you factor in all of the other anti-LGBTQ+ bills (i.e., HB 1144, HB 1181, HB 1430, SB 2244, SB 2392). We can't seem to get free universal lunch for all students (HB 1475 failed), but we can apparently agree on our hatred for LGBTQ+ people – got it.

Let's get our priorities straight instead of wasting time on resolutions and bills like this that only seek to harm the people who are actively contributing to our communities and this state. Again, as state legislators, you are supposed to represent your constituents and not your religious beliefs. Your constituents are overwhelmingly demanding a DO NOT pass on HCR 3013.

Thank you for your time,

Kylie A. Thurber, M.S.