

Chairmen Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing you today to speak against this resolution, because I believe it is not only harmful but also deeply un-Christian.

Jesus himself gave us the greatest commandment: *"Love your neighbor as yourself..."* (Mark 12:31). Nowhere did He say to love only those who live exactly as we do. He did not tell us to exclude or reject people for being different. Instead, He taught love, kindness, and acceptance. If we claim to follow His teachings, which I do, we should not be trying to break apart loving families.

God made my son just the way he is. He did not make a mistake. My son is gay, and he has married the love of his life. Their relationship is built on the same values as any other loving marriage—commitment, respect, and support for one another. I ask you: What evidence do the authors of this resolution have that allowing same-sex marriage has been a detriment to our society? And if there is no such evidence, which there is not, why does it need to be reversed? And I also ask, how has it truly affected them personally? And was it because it truly affected them negatively or was it because it just made them feel uncomfortable? Or is it because they believe the religious pious rhetoric of individuals who would rather cling to the fire and brimstone perception of God and not the loving God Jesus showed us.

And I can also assure you that it does not make everyone feel uncomfortable. On the contrary, for me and my family and my friends (even those that have deeply Republican values), it has brought nothing but joy. Seeing my son happy and loved is one of the greatest blessings of my and my husband's life. In my experience, the only time same-sex marriage is seen as a negative is when it is not accepted. But what gives anyone the right to disrupt the lives of families who do accept it? And embrace it as just as normal and natural as any other marriage, which my family does.

What exactly are we afraid will happen? Has that fear actually come true? It has been 10 years since the legalization of same-sex marriage. In reality, during that time, same-sex marriage has not truly harmed anyone. It has simply allowed people to live their lives with dignity, just as any of us would want.

Also, we are not put on this earth solely to procreate, as the authors of the resolution suggest. The existence of adoption is just one example of the truth of this statement. Adoption proves that families are not defined by biology but by love and commitment. Families come in many forms, and all should be honored and protected.

But we also need to acknowledge that same sex couples need the same legal rights as non-same-sex couples. Why does it bother people that same sex couples exchanging vows to be together for the rest of their lives is called marriage? Why do we need a distinction? Is it because they don't want them to have rights? Giving other people rights never takes away your rights. What have heterosexual couples lost because of same sex marriage? Nothing. My husband and I have not lost any of our rights.

When we focus on love instead of our own discomfort or maybe even hate, we see that there is no real difference between my son's marriage and any other. Love is love. And as followers of Christ (as the authors claim they are), as members of an already truly diverse society, we should be embracing that love—not seeking to tear it apart.

I urge you to stand against this resolution. Let families live in peace. What good will come of tearing them apart? I can see none. I can just express the heartache and turmoil that will come to our family if the authors true motivation would come to fruition. We need to send a much more loving and Christian-like message from North Dakota to our fellow North Dakotans, fellow Americans, and the world.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tracy Foss