

To: Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Andrew Young
Subject: Testimony in Opposition of House Concurrent Resolution 3013
Date: March 11, 2025

Honorable members of the legislature,

My name is Andrew Young. I write to you today as a business owner, a husband, a father, and as a proud North Dakotan who believes in the future of our state. I write to express my deep concerns regarding HCR 3013, and the message passing this resolution sends. This resolution not only completely defies the welcoming nature that defines the spirit of North Dakota, but actively discourages people from investing their lives, businesses, and families in our state. This resolution sends a clear message: "If you are different, if you think differently, North Dakota is not for you." And that message is dangerous—not just socially, but economically.

Like all of you, I understand and know the North Dakota experience: It is my past, my present, and—if our state remains a place where everyone belongs—my future. I was raised in Napoleon, where my parents ran the local pharmacy. I was a state FFA officer. I attended NDSU, choosing to stay close to home because I have always cherished how North Dakota is defined by its strong communities, by people who show up for each other, no matter what.

But, I'll be honest: I considered leaving. In fact, I did. I spent time living in New York, Los Angeles, and even abroad in New Zealand. I saw the opportunities that existed elsewhere. But in the end, I came back—more than a decade ago—because I believed in the values of North Dakota.

But what really drew me back to North Dakota were the people. No place I've lived has come close to the resilience, warmth, and generosity I've found here. It's this same commitment to community that led me to build a business here, to employ North Dakotans, and to reinvest in the place that made me who I am. It's what keeps me here—fighting to ensure that the next generation sees North Dakota as a place worth calling home.

It's probably no surprise then, that I have chosen to spend my life and grow my family—right here in North Dakota—with someone for whom small-town values matter just as much, and for whom it's just as important to give back and invest in his community. What this reinvestment in the community looks like for him is driving 60 miles every day to and from the Class B school he teaches at, where he's managed to grow the school's choir – a completely optional elective course – from 50 to 210 students. What he's done, that's not just growth—that's investment in young people. That's what happens when we create a North Dakota where everyone is valued, where people are encouraged to stay, to contribute, and to make their communities better. **And yet, HCR 3013 threatens that sense of belonging.**

Our daughter, Mari, was born right here in Bismarck. Like all of you, the thing that motivates me the most is doing everything I can to ensure that *she* has the best possible future. My day-to-day looks just like every other North Dakotan's: Meals together at the dinner table, daycare drop-offs and pick-ups, weekends with Mari's grandparents, and working as hard as I can to provide the best possible future for my family. And I know that the future that I'm working towards isn't different from the one you imagine:

A North Dakota where every kid feels safe, valued, and supported. Where they can dream big, without fear that their state will one day tell them they don't belong. A place where fear and doubt don't hold back our youngest from chasing their dreams. This is the North Dakota we must fight to preserve.

But if this resolution passes, what message are we sending?

HCR 3013 doesn't just hurt individuals—it damages our state's reputation. It signals to the world that some people here matter less, that their families are unwelcome, that their investment in our communities doesn't count. That's not just wrong; it's objectively bad for business. Companies looking to relocate or expand will take their investments to other states. Young people will take their talents and abilities elsewhere, to places that actually respect their dignity, rather than corrupt the idea of dignity in order to put their own will over the people's. **And once that talent is gone, once that economic opportunity has left, how do we get it back?**

This is not about political rhetoric. This is about real consequences for real people—your neighbors, your constituents, your communities. Your kids, and your grandkids, and the kiddos they play with on the playground. For those who will ultimately cast their vote, I hope you will step back and consider the real implications of what you are doing: Justify it however you will, but a vote for this resolution is slamming the door in the face of thousands of North Dakotans, letting them know that their contributions are not welcome, that the state does not want their re-investment or their goodwill.

Is that the vision of North Dakota you want to project? Is that the vision your constituents elected you to represent?

Tonight, somewhere in this state, will be a kid lying awake, wondering why all this hate in the air. They're asking themselves: "Is this normal? Do I have a future here?" They're watching to see if North Dakota is a place where they can belong and succeed. I used to be this kid. And beyond our borders, business owners, job seekers, and families are asking themselves the same thing: Is North Dakota a place for me?

We owe them an answer.

North Dakota is more than my home. It's more than your home. It's our legacy. Let's remind every family—no matter who they are or whom they love—that they belong here. Let's reject HCR 3013 and affirm that our state is a place where everyone can thrive.

This isn't just about you; this isn't just about today. It's about the future of North Dakota.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Young". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Andrew Young
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