

Chairperson Larson and members of the committee,

I wish to present my testimony strongly urging each of you to move a Do Not Pass on HCR 3013. To put it simply, not only is this resolution a waste of time and taxpayer money, but it presents our state as a hateful and unwelcoming place.

I have had the opportunity over the last several years to work with many amazing young people. Several of them, including my own daughter, are members of the LGBTQ+ community. All of them have been kind, intelligent, thoughtful individuals who would be a tremendous asset to any community. The most common thread among the young people I have worked with is that the vast majority of them are anxious to leave North Dakota. I am referring to all the young people I have worked with, not only the LGBTQ+ youth. Growing up in North Dakota I remember a similar desire to leave, but when I was a college student thirty years ago the desire to leave was because we wanted opportunities we didn't feel we had here. The young people I have worked with feel differently. In fact, many of them would like to stay, but are compelled to leave. It is legislative actions such as HCR 3013 that are compelling them to leave this state. Whether they as individuals feel persecuted, or if they feel their friends are being persecuted, they desire to live and go to school somewhere they all can feel safe and welcome. The passage of HCR 3013 through the House of Representatives sent a clear message of intolerance and bigotry which has angered many, republicans and democrats. Don't let the Senate make the same mistake.

Beyond making North Dakota unwelcoming to many who live here, there is frankly no compelling or valid argument to support its passage. I have heard legislators cite the unfortunate 2004 addition to our state's constitution as though this were reason enough. A lot has changed in 21 years, and the people of North Dakota now feel significantly different about this topic. Others cite religious reasons as support for this resolution. While they are free to hold whatever religious beliefs they like, their religious belief should not dictate another's belief in a society with religious freedom. I have several friends who are Lutheran pastors and are as passionate as I am about this resolution. I have also had others who state it is a resolution, not a law, and "nobody's rights are being taken away." It is a resolution that sends a message that the people of North Dakota believe some people should not have rights that others do have. That is not a North Dakota I want to live in.

Finally, I would like you all to consider this: what would your reaction be if a group of people were actively declaring your child should not be allowed the same benefits accorded to others through marriage? This resolution may not take away anyone's right to marry, but that is the ultimate end goal. I would like to think if a group of people were actively trying to take something away from your daughter, you would do everything within your power to try to stop them. I love my daughter, and I will do anything within my power to stop anyone who tries to take something away from her; especially something as fundamental as her right to happiness.

Respectfully submitted,

Justin S. Anderon  
Burlington, ND