

Dear Chair Larson and the members of the Judiciary Committee,  
I urge Do Not Pass on HCR 3013.

My name is Johnathan Schilling and I'm a resident of Grand Forks. I moved here relatively recently (from Las Vegas, funnily enough) and I love it so much more. The green grass and trees, the white snow, the super kind people, seasons! It's idyllic. Well... almost.

I am a gay man, too. When walking down University Avenue with my friends from UND's Queer-Trans Alliance group, there are many occasions when people in cars roll down their windows and yell slurs at us, such as "faggots" or "fags" (I'm pretty obvious, as I usually wear pink head to toe, have long, curly hair, and wear an earring). As it stands, these meant-to-be-harmful words are essentially empty threats. Yes, some people are offended by them, but I'd personally hate to imagine what might've happened if there weren't societal (including legal) consequences specifically for physical violence against our group. Actually, thinking of it, I don't have to imagine it; rather, all I have to do is read one of a great many books on that topic for a time in history when that wasn't the case. Anyways, a few community members attempted to report these incidents to the University due to their no-tolerance policy, but to no avail (at least no communication back about it and any potential actions that might've been taken to limit such harassment). We've decided to just move forward, deeming that it's a social problem that needs to be addressed some other way. And voila! A situation has come where it is possible to address it on an effective social scale (coming from a more local government itself, no less).

See, my plea to you is not one of seeking privilege or some sort of elevated social class. For my community, I seek the same rights and privileges as others. Ideally, I'd like to see a

society where all people are treated well by others and problems sorted out fairly and justly. Obviously that's an unrealistic dream, but it's one worth working towards. In reality, I'd just like to (at the very least and barring all else) see that on paper. And, lucky for me, it is. At least currently. What this resolution does (if passed) is attempt to take that equality away. Or, at the very least, undermine it and tell the citizens of North Dakota that our elected officials do not care about equality and freedom for all. Is this truly the message we want to be sent? Has it been considered how this resolution, if passed, might embolden the very same misguided bigots, who wish for the existence of me and my community to cease, to commit potential acts of violence against us? They might consider the passing of this resolution to mean they have allies in the legislature who would support their potential violence, and have the opposite of what is known as the "chilling effect". What about future laws? If we don't have marriage equality under the law, might it not be reasonable to remove equality of ownership, or educational opportunity, or any number of things? Down the rabbit hole we'd go, and deep we could go indeed.

Hypothetically, equality of life could be revoked. This is dangerous for my community and I, and I hope you can not only see that, but also see that we are people as well, and if you believe in a God, created by Him just like everything and everybody else. We deserve, not everything, but just plain old human decency, just like everyone else. Again, I urge Do Not Pass for this resolution.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to this great and beautiful state. I know it can be hard, but I have faith that you can and will make the more just decision.

- Johnathan A Schilling