

## TESTIMONY OF LISA EDISON-SMITH IN OPPOSITION TO HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 3013

Members of the 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly,

My name is Lisa Edison-Smith and I offer this testimony in **opposition** to House Concurrent Resolution 3013. I am one of five generations of Edisons calling North Dakota home for over 100 years. I am a mother, grandmother, church elder, and an attorney licensed to practice law in North Dakota since 1997.

As a member of the bar, I stand perplexed at the apparent fixation of this legislature and our national political leaders on divisive “culture wars” instead of the important work of passing legislation for the betterment of the people of the state and nation. There is one purpose and one purpose only for this resolution: to publicly vilify the LGBTQ community in North Dakota.

This resolution has no legal meaning. It is intended to be hurtful. And it is hurtful (and frightening). It is a message to members of the LGBTQ community that we are not welcome in North Dakota. This message is powerful and creates fear about the future for ourselves and our families in this state.

As members of the LGBTQ community, my wife and I rejoiced when *Obergefell* was handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court on June 26, 2015. We married in 2016 and live day to day as mostly retired, doting grandmothers to two beautiful grandchildren. We spend our time doing decidedly ordinary things like attending sporting events, volunteering at our church, tending our yard, and enjoying the good life in the Red River Valley.

Our marriage threatens no one and impinges on the beliefs of no one. Stable, long-term relationships are the hallmark of marriage and the foundation of strong communities. But, this resolution supports the insidious message that LGBTQ citizens are lesser citizens and our marriages are somehow a threat to the very state and country we love.

I have never before seriously thought of leaving North Dakota. Our families’ roots here are deep. But, we are afraid. We are afraid of the persistent question of “what is next?” What will our legislators, our fellow citizens, and people who purport to be our friends do next to deny our rights?

We ask for no special privilege. We want to make our retirement home in North Dakota and to continue to offer our talents, tax dollars, and resources to the communities we love. The fear of the steady and hateful erosion of our rights, however, keeps us up at night and forces us to consider where we might take refuge if forced to leave our home.

I simply ask,

IS THIS THE MESSAGE OF INTOLERANCE THAT THIS LEGISLATURE WANTS TO SEND TO ITS CITIZENS, POTENTIAL WORKERS, AND THE NATION?

I pray that it is not.

HCR 3013 is a dangerous, misguided resolution that encourages the open defiance of the U.S. Constitution by suggesting that the Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly can simply “reject[ ] the United States Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*.” This resolution is yet another example of the unceasing and tone-deaf attempts by certain “culture warriors” to divert from the real business of governing for the benefit of the people and families of the state of North Dakota.

**As you cast your vote, I ask you to remember that you are impacting real people.** People who love this state and ask only to have the same civil rights as others. This undoubtedly includes people you know, your constituents, family members, and friends. It also includes us:

**LISA & PENNY  
Married September 2016  
Native North Dakotans, Grandmas, Church Members, Taxpayers, and Voters**

I urge the Committee to remember the North Dakota value of respect for your neighbors and the rights of others and REJECT HCR 3013.

LISA EDISON-SMITH  
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA