

Hello, my name is Don Lippert, and I am writing this testimony in opposition to HR3013. This resolution is both unnecessary and unwelcome in the State of North Dakota. I may be overly optimistic about the nature of North Dakotans and the “North Dakota Nice” way of life, but as someone who has grown up through the years of fighting record setting floods in the Red River valley, I seen that sense of civic and communal spirit. We worked tirelessly trying to save homes and farmsteads where we had no real stake other than to make sure one of our fellow North Dakota s didn’t suffer a tremendous loss. These efforts aren’t just found in flood fighting, they can be seen any time a farmer needs assistance with their crops due to a medical emergency, and their neighbors come together to lend a hand because be it not for good luck, it might be them next time. They can be seen every time one of our volunteer first responders heads out to a fire or crash to take care of their neighbors because they have that sense of fidelity to their community that we see every day in big and small towns across the state.

When I see a resolution like this, it makes me wonder if those people proposing it or voting for it have ever participated in or needed the support of that communal effort that we as North Dakotans try to embody as often as we can. This resolution displays none of that community spirit that shows up when our friends and neighbors are in need. It seems born out of the opposite, the desire to excommunicate people from their communities and tell them that they aren’t wanted here, even if they were some of the same people fighting floods, putting out fires, or helping with a harvest. Again, I’d like to think we as North Dakotans can rise about this kind of division and realize that regardless of whomever we choose to marry, we are all a part of the same communities and we deserve each other’s respect and kindness.

I will close on a personal note. This resolution is written to denigrate the love and marriages of my friends, my family members and many more people all over this state who don’t deserve that condemnation for merely existing. And while it may not target me directly as a person, as part of the community that is the State of North Dakota, it does target my community, and as is written in Matthew 25:40, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” So I urge you all to vote against this resolution for the sake of all of the citizens of North Dakota.