

Dear North Dakota Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Lee Youngs, and I am a resident of District 35. I am writing to stand in opposition of North Dakota House Concurrent Resolution 3013 that has been put forth for the 69th Legislative Assembly and request a do not pass recommendation for this resolution. My concern is that the resolution seeks to legalize the discrimination of same sex couples based on the religious belief of some of our citizens. The idea that marriage is between one man and one woman is religious in nature. This is why churches and other houses of worship are not forced to perform same sex marriages as is their right. Though a religious marriage and a legal marriage are often performed at the same time they are not the same thing. You can receive a legal marriage without a religious marriage and vice versa. This resolution seeks to refine a legal marriage based on a religious definition which is a violation of the First Amendment of the US Constitution which grants all US citizens freedom of religion to choose which if any religion they wish to practice. This resolution is attempting to appeal to the Supreme Court to redefine a legal marriage in a discriminatory and restrictive manner that would strip ND & US citizens of their legal rights. Under this understanding it is critical to acknowledge that no one's religious rights are being restricted under the current legal definition. As this resolution wants to redefine a legal and not a religious marriage you must consider the legal rights at stake. These include but are not limited to Social Security benefits regarding a spouse's death or disability, tax advantages which often include a reduction in taxes, qualifying for the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to allow for one to provide caregiving services for a family member, next of kin rights for making medical decisions if your spouse is incapable of deciding for themselves. These are not rights which ought to be restricted on the basis of sexual orientation or someone else's religious beliefs. Therefore, as a concerned constituent of North Dakota I would ask that you issue a Do Not Pass recommendation and vote no on HCR 3013 as it seeks to undermine the Constitutional rights of some of our citizens based on the religious beliefs of others. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Lee Youngs
District 35