

## Testimony in Opposition to House Concurrent Resolution No. 3013

Submitted to the North Dakota House of Representatives

By Chris Kadrmas

### Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I write today in strong and unwavering opposition to House Concurrent Resolution No. 3013, which seeks to urge the United States Supreme Court to overturn *Obergefell v. Hodges* and restrict marriage to a union between one man and one woman. This resolution is not only legally and economically harmful—it is profoundly dangerous for LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly young people, in North Dakota.

### Personal Experience: A State That Once Gave Me Hope

I moved to North Dakota in 2017 from Arkansas, a state where I faced relentless harassment and bullying because of who I am. In high school, the discrimination I endured was so severe that I attempted to take my own life. I know firsthand what it feels like to grow up in a place where your own government sends the message that you are not valued, that you are not worthy of the same dignity and respect as your peers.

When I moved here, I was hopeful—my husband is from North Dakota, and I believed this state was a place where fairness, kindness, and integrity mattered. I found communities that were supportive, and I believed North Dakota could be a place where all people could thrive. This bill, however, sends a cruel and dangerous message to young people like I once was: 'You are not welcome. You are not worth it. You should be ashamed.'

### Impact on LGBTQ+ Youth Suicide Rates

There is overwhelming evidence that government-sanctioned discrimination—like that encouraged by this resolution—has a direct impact on LGBTQ+ mental health and suicide rates. According to The Trevor Project's 2023 National Survey on LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health:

- 41% of LGBTQ+ young people seriously considered suicide in the past year, including 50% of transgender and nonbinary youth.
- LGBTQ+ youth who live in communities that are supportive report significantly lower suicide rates than those who live in hostile environments.
- Legislation that targets LGBTQ+ rights leads to increased suicide risk—a study from *JAMA Pediatrics* found that LGBTQ+ youth suicide rates increase by 14% in states that pass discriminatory laws.

HCR 3013 is not just a resolution—it is a direct attack on the well-being of vulnerable young people in our state. When lawmakers debate whether LGBTQ+ citizens deserve equal rights, young people hear it loud and clear: 'You do not belong.' The consequences of this message are measured in lives lost.

## **Economic and Workforce Consequences**

Beyond the devastating human cost, discriminatory policies like HCR 3013 also hurt North Dakota's economy and workforce development. Studies show that states with inclusive policies experience higher GDP growth, stronger business investment, and better workforce retention than states that pass anti-LGBTQ+ measures. According to the Center for American Progress, nearly 40% of LGBTQ+ workers actively avoid states with discriminatory laws when choosing where to live and work.

If this resolution moves forward, North Dakota risks losing skilled workers, young professionals, and businesses that prioritize diversity and inclusion. The economic damage would be profound, just as it was in Indiana in 2015, when backlash over an anti-LGBTQ+ law cost the state over \$60 million in lost revenue from canceled conventions and corporate withdrawals.

## **Conclusion: North Dakota Must Choose Hope Over Harm**

HCR 3013 does nothing to improve the lives of North Dakotans—it only serves to divide and dehumanize. It tells young LGBTQ+ people that they are less than, that they do not deserve the same rights as their peers, and that their government does not believe they are worthy of love and dignity.

I urge this committee to reject this dangerous and hateful resolution. North Dakota has the chance to be a state that values all of its citizens, where young people grow up knowing they are supported, valued, and safe. We must not send them the opposite message.

I refuse to let this state become the kind of place I fought so hard to escape.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chris Kadrmas