

Testimony by Paige Gray
to the
House Human Services Committee
Hearing on House Bill 1298
January 25, 2021

1/21/2021

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Paige Gray and I became a permanent member of the Fargo-Moorhead community roughly six years ago. I am a current resident of North Dakota.

I am writing today to say that House Bill NO. 1298 is a travesty and is unbefitting of the spirit of North Dakota.

When I was growing up I was surprised to learn that North Dakota had a negative population growth. It was seen as a state with no opportunities that no sane young person would want to make a life for themselves in. After the oil boom I settled in Fargo due to the positive economic climate and I decided to give it a chance. The North Dakota of today might very well have a future, but our path forward isn't going to come about by enacting divisive and unnecessary laws that stigmatize our trans youth. This bill is a solution without any real problem to fix, and it scapegoats a vulnerable population for political ends in doing so.

This bill is out of step with the population that will bear the brunt of its enactment, which is young North Dakotans. PRII did a survey in 2019 about how Americans view transgender issues, and I'm going to excerpt the section about the younger generation here:

Younger Americans ages 18-29 (85%) are more likely than Americans ages 65 and older (75%) to say transgender people face at least some stigma in their community. But notably, young Americans are nearly twice as likely as seniors to believe transgender people face a lot of stigma (50% vs. 27%).

This report can be viewed in its entirety here: <https://www.prii.org/research/americas-growing-support-for-transgender-rights/>

Times are changing, and for the next generation the acceptance of transgender individuals is simply going to be a part of life. As a resident of this great state, I implore you, don't contribute to the stigma that exists for trans people and don't approve of a bill like this that is just spoiling for an ugly political fight. Please look into your hearts and find a compassionate and measured responses to these sorts of delicate issues, a responses befitting of a marginalized population that relies on the state for its protections.

Be on the right side of history and vote against House Bill NO. 1298

Thank you for your time and consideration

~ Paige Gary, Fargo ND