

Chairperson Weisz and members of the committee,

My name is Kristin Rubbelke and I am the Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers North Dakota Chapter (NASW-ND). On behalf of NASW-ND, thank you for reading and considering our position on HB 1298.

NASW-ND opposes HB 1298 due to its intent to discriminate against North Dakota citizens.

NASW Ethical Standards state “[s]ocial workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.”

Sports and athletic events are very important to the people of North Dakota, and HB 1298 discriminates against transgender adults, youth, and children by preventing them from participating in and enjoying the benefits of their chosen sports activities. The bill also serves to further isolate and ostracize transgender individuals and sends the message that they are not welcome or tolerated in North Dakota – a message that is far from the truth.

The NASW Code of Ethics asserts the inherent dignity and worth of every person and requires social workers to promote self-determination and support an individual’s capacity and opportunity to change and address his or her own needs. HB 1298 denies individual self-determination and opportunity.

Therefore, NASW-ND strongly opposes HB 1298 in its entirety and requests that it be withdrawn from consideration.

Sincerely,



Kristin Rubbelke, LSW
Executive Director
NASW-ND