

Testimony for the House Judiciary Committee

House Bill 1503

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February 16, 2021

Chairman Klemin and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Alexis Varvel. I live in Bismarck, District 47.

So, what do I think of House Bill 1503? It's a start.

Is this a legislative intrusion into the business of the Board? Yes. Under normal circumstances, would this bill be legislative overreach? Also, yes. Would this legislation allow extremist groups to organize on campus? Yes. Would this legislation allow foreign dictatorships to send their propagandists here? Also, yes.

This legislation is probably necessary because of distrust that presently exists between legislators and university administrators. Higher education needs the money, and if the requirements of this legislation are the price for restoring funding to higher education, then passing this bill may well be worth it.

A public college or a university would be prohibited from attempting to keep Black Lives Matter, Antifa, BDS, Earth First!, Mni Wiconi, Cthulhu, or the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster from organizing a speech. And that would be fine.

If you don't want a student group to impose an ideological litmus test to ensure outward adherence to the religion of "critical race theory", a Marxist student group enforcing its own ideological conformity, or even a student group enforcing a belief in temple prostitution, you may wish to tweak lines 26 to 30 on page 1.

If university administrators are sufficiently fanatical and indoctrinated to warrant passage of this legislation, then obviously much more needs to be done. Job security for college faculty, including tenure, would need to be strengthened so "woke" administrators dedicated to promoting so-called "critical race theory" would think twice before imposing ideological control. Foreign dictatorships would need to be prohibited from establishing overseas secret police outposts under the guise of cultural organizations, such as a Confucius Institute at NDSU.

The Legislature should also ensure that workforce training for public employees, including people working in higher education, must be prohibited from stereotyping, scapegoating, or degrading people on the basis of race or sex.

There can be something rather humorous about seeing UND recommend that people read Era Bell Thompson's autobiography *American Daughter*. It's a good read, so I would recommend it too. Still, when people actually read her book, they might notice how her remarks about Grand Forks of that era are downright scathing. Era Bell Thompson was a witness to an era when President Kane of UND was a key ally of Halsey Ambrose of the Ku Klux Klan, against his own faculty.

It may seem far more delightful to put a celebratory face on the intersectionality of so-called “critical race theory” rather than owning up to the role of higher education in promoting systemic racism, including blackface and Garrison Dam.

Although it may be tempting for university administrators to promote the idea that the people of this region are a bunch of ignorant yokels in constant need of reeducation so they can conform to the latest trendiness of “woke” intersectional corporate capitalism, that temptation should be avoided. Trends come and go. What seems to be the inevitable future may turn out to be an embarrassing fad.

I mildly support House Bill 1503. If this bill is necessary, there is more work to do.

Thank you.

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