

Testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee

SB 2003 – NDUS

Andrew Alexis Varvel

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Chairman Holmberg and Members of the Committee:

My name is Andrew Alexis Varvel. I live in Bismarck, and I am a graduate of UND.

Section 1 of Article VIII of the North Dakota Constitution is very clear. Our public schools, whether primary, secondary, or higher education, must be “free from sectarian control”. Sectarianism should not only be understood to include official religions, but also systems of dogmatic assertion that masquerade as academic theory, “theory” that cannot be verified. This is particularly the case whenever any system of dogmatic assertion attempts to impose bullying sessions that stereotype and scapegoat people on the basis of race, sex, or religion.

Teaching *about* religion in higher education is perfectly appropriate. Proselytizing and indoctrinating students, faculty, or staff into a religion is not. So, please feel free to ask Chancellor Hagerott and other administrators in the North Dakota University System about maintaining academic freedom at a time when a sense of urgency could easily overwhelm normal safeguards to protect liberty.

Higher education should definitely teach *about* “critical race theory” and “anti-racism”. The problem comes from using state money for indoctrination sessions, placing these concepts in a required core curriculum, or making decisions on tenure dependent on faculty participation in what may appear to be reeducation.

Thank you.

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