

Truman L. Hamburger
Student Advocates of North Dakota (SAND)
Testimony on HB 1298
Senate Judiciary Committee
Tuesday March 16th

RE: Testimony in Opposition of HB 1298

Dear Honorable Senators of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I urge a DO NOT PASS recommendation on HB1298.

My name is Truman Hamburger, I am representing the High School Democrats of America as the North Dakota Director of Development, the Student Advocates of North Dakota as the Vice President, but most importantly, I am writing as a North Dakotan, Urging you to keep North Dakota the kind state we are by placing a do not pass recommendation on this bill.

This bill hurts students, and this stance is reinforced by the three areas of analysis I present before you today. Firstly this bill hurts the mental health of transgender students, invites gender policing for cisgender students, and finally, this bill is transphobic and sexist.

This bill will hurt the mental health of transgender students in North Dakota. Trans students' gender is different from that at birth, and they often experience gender dysphoria, which the mayo clinic defines as a "feeling of discomfort or distress that might occur in people whose gender identity differs from sex-related physical characteristics." This bill reinforces the idea that the trans students of ND are not their actual gender, giving these students dysphoria degrading their mental health. HB1298 could promote bullying by demonstrating to students that our Legislature does not care about respecting trans students, so why should they? Trans students are among the most vulnerable groups of people; we should be protecting them, not targeting them. This bill affects all students as well.

In addition to the effects on trans students, HB1298 will open the doors to gender policing for all students. Once we start doing any form of gender policing, we allow disgruntled competitors or athletes with atypical physiques to be subjected to invasive regulations. We cannot allow accusations of competitors being "too masculine" or "too good to be female" in our sports, as it would just be a devolution into sexism and transphobia, which brings me to my last point. This bill is sexist and transphobic.

Bigotry, in general, is comorbid (you will never meet a racist who has progressive views of the LGBTQ+ community), but two that are inseparably linked are Transphobia and Sexism.

And when we look at HB 1298, many of the representatives who support the bill say they are acting in a feminist interest, stopping trans athletes from competing because it protects women's sports, but when you pull that argument apart, you see the dichotomy of sexism and transphobia first; it implies that trans women aren't real women, which is transphobia. However, it also plays out an old sexist trope that women require protecting from a threat that trans women pose. The two reinforce each other and cannot be separated no matter what.

In Conclusion, this bill hurts North Dakota's students, and it is sexist and transphobic. North Dakota is a kind place full of kind people, and a DO NOT PASS recommendation is one step we can take to keep it that way.

Thank You For Your Time;

Truman L. Hamburger

SAND Student

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