

March 15, 2021

Chairperson Larson and Committee Members,

As a local church pastor, I strongly urge a Do NOT Pass on HB1298. This bill is detrimental to the emotional health of transgender students, their families, friends, classmates, support systems, and the entire community as a whole. As a church pastor, I have witnessed the damage bills like this and other discriminatory acts have on youth and adults. The decisions you make regarding bills like HB1298 have a direct impact on depression and suicide rates among not only transgender students, but all LGBTQ+ individuals of all ages. When you pass discriminatory legislation or fail to pass protective measures for individuals, I see an increase in hopelessness and an increase in the desire for successful young adults to leave North Dakota. As both a pastor and employer, I have spoken with numerous individuals who refuse to accept a position in North Dakota because of bills and attitudes like those represented in HB1298. Community health and the health of our children is of upmost importance to me, as I am sure it is to you as well; therefore I ask for a DO NOT PASS on HB1298.

Thank you,
Rev. Gretchen Deeg
Local Church Pastor

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