



To: Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Katie Mastel, Government Affairs Manager, FMWF Chamber of Commerce
Date: March 16, 2021
RE: **Oppose HB 1298**

Chair Larson, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in regards to House Bill 1298. For the record, my name is Katie Mastel, and I serve as the Government Affairs & Advocacy Manager at the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce. Our **Chamber respectfully opposes House Bill 1298 based on the detrimental economic impact it would have on our state.** Various other philosophical arguments could be brought forward, however as The Chamber, we are testifying in opposition solely on the merits of the negative economic impact of this bill. This legislation has a plethora of expected adverse effects to our state including a loss of economic stimulation in the hospitality and tourism industry and an impediment to successful business and workforce attraction.

This legislation puts our local hospitality industry, with the CVB's Sports Team estimating more than \$10 million of annual economic stimulation from the more than 100 sports events they assist, in jeopardy. If passed, this bill would pose a threat for large sporting events such as USA Wrestling, USA Swimming, Fargo Youth Hockey Association tournaments to cease their tournaments in North Dakota, due to the constraints of this legislation. These sporting events fill hotels, restaurants and retail stores with teams and their families, contributing to our local economies. The loss of even one of these tournaments could prove a loss of millions to our economy.

In addition, there have been conversations in South Dakota, where a bill with similar language has moved through the legislature, that this could potentially pose adverse impacts on recruiting new businesses, such as Amazon, to the state. As in South Dakota, the passage of this legislation could prove damaging for the brand of our state, in turn hindering the recruitment of businesses and workforce, negatively impacting our economic growth.

We realize The Chamber isn't the expert when it comes to policy related to transgender athletes competing in sports. Instead, we would advocate that those decisions be made by those that have studied this issue – the governing and sanctioning bodies of these sports organizations – not our legislative body. Many of these governing bodies such as those of USA Wrestling and USA Hockey, already have policies in place related to this issue. As they have been engaged in this issue for decades, and are better suited to address this issue in an equitable and appropriate fashion.

With these deep economic concerns in mind, **we respectfully ask that you oppose House Bill 1298.** Thank you for your consideration.

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