

Testimony Presented on HB 1298 to the

Senate Judiciary Committee

Senator Diane Larson, Chairman

by

Matuor Alier, Chair of Human Relations Commission

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On behalf of the City of Fargo's Human Relations Commission, we submit testimony in opposition of HB 1298.

We know that the State of North Dakota prides itself on being an inviting and welcoming community and opposes discrimination. We believe this proposed bill is contrary to this goal. This bill negates fairness and equal rights for all people in our state and counters freedom for individuals defining their identity and gender.

National research tells us that 75% of transgender youth feel unsafe at school, have significantly lower GPAs, are more likely to miss school out of concern for their safety, and are less likely to continue their education.

According to Municipal Equality Index, gender identity and expression are central to the way we see ourselves and engage in the world around us. We know that transgender people, especially youth, are targeted unfairly and suffer from increased difficulties at school, including bullying and denial of participation based on identity. This can lead to depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.

The proposed legislation singles out school-aged students and risks that students are not able to find a safe place to participate in their sports or community based on their identity. We believe this bill creates an additional barrier and causes harm to our youth. To keep and enhance a welcoming and inclusive community in North Dakota, we strongly encourage DO NOT PASS.