

1/24/2023

Dear Chairman Weisz and Members of the Human Services Committee.

My name is Mandi Carroll. I am testifying as a private citizen from District 40 and I would like to thank you for your tireless service to the people of North Dakota during the legislative session.

The Air Force brought me to North Dakota in 2007 as an Air Force spouse and Air Force veteran. I owned a successful photography business under my name in Minot for 13 years but recently retired that business to attend the Minot State social work program. I am currently completing my internship with High Plains Fair Housing Center. I am an active member of the ND chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and serve there on numerous boards. Additionally, I have served on the board of the Taube Art Museum since 2016, including serving four years as board president. Our family has been active in our community with volunteerism in and outside the church, both in Minot and Grand Forks, since moving to North Dakota.

Today, I am asking for a DO NOT PASS ON HB 1332. In May 2015, the NASW released its position statement about Sexual Orientation Change Efforts (SOCE) and Conversion Therapy with Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals, and Transgender Persons. I highly recommend that you read it, and I have taken the liberty of printing off a copy for each of you on the committee.

In case you do not get a chance to read it before voting on this legislation, I will recap some vital portions:

First - In discussing ethical decisions for social work practice, it is stressed that “the priority of professional intervention at the individual level will be to help people achieve self-actualization, rather than helping them to learn how to adjust to the existing social order.”

Second - the practice of conversion therapy violates the very tenets of the social work profession as outlined in the NASW *Code of Ethics*. For brevity, I will ask you to refer to the materials presented.

Third - Social workers must advocate against a policy or practice interventions that create or reinforce prejudice and discrimination towards gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons and their families.

Finally – You will hear, in detail, today from the NASW ND executive director about how this bill violates our ethics, so I will just take this opportunity to, again, highlight that the NASW put out specific guidance for this exact practice, opposing it for any uses.

My outstanding professors at Minot State University remind me that a good social worker must follow the best-informed and evidence-based practices. We are also reminded that if we violate the National Association of Social Workers' code of ethics, we could and likely will lose our

license to practice. Even if this bill is passed, it would still be unethical for social workers to practice “conversion therapy.”

I took the liberty of looking at the professions of this bill's sponsors. The professions include legal assistant, owner of an excavating and plumbing business, pub owner & retired military, president of a landfill, National Guard member, real estate owner and agent, and information systems for Ducks Unlimited. Of course, this does not give you the sum of their professional backgrounds. Still, there is no other human service professional sponsoring this bill other than Representative Rohr, who is a nurse practitioner. For your information, the American Academy of Nursing also has a policy statement about the unethical practice of conversion therapy. I have linked it in my written testimony.

Now imagine you are standing where I stand, trying to defend the best policies for your workplace. I suspect there is not one of you who would agree that legislators who have no background in your industry are best suited to make decisions about that industry. I especially anticipate this would be so in the case of a practice that has been shown to be wholly ineffective and incredibly harmful. These facts are supported by decades of research and evidence, yet you are asked to disregard them without refuting evidence.

I mean this with absolute respect. No one can know about everything. In fact, as a 47-year-old woman in college, I continue to realize just how much I do *not* know. Thankfully we have experts to consult who have compiled their data using peer-reviewed, evidence-based studies.

Thank you again for your commitment to serving individuals in your community. I urge you to look at the research about efficacy and damage to already potentially fragile individuals, and please vote DO NOT PASS ON HB 1332.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Mandi Carroll

Minot, ND

American Academy of Nursing on Policy

American Academy of Nursing position statement on reparative therapy

[https://www.nursingoutlook.org/article/S0029-6554\(15\)00125-6/pdf](https://www.nursingoutlook.org/article/S0029-6554(15)00125-6/pdf)