

Chair Weisz and members of the House Human Services Committee,

My testimony is in opposition to House Bill 1332. I ask that you give this bill a DO NOT PASS.

The practice of conversion therapy in attempt to change a person's sexual identity and gender identity has long been debunked by numerous professional medical, psychiatric, counseling, and social work organizations. It is banned in 22 countries, 25 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and over 100 municipalities across the United States.

Conversion therapy is a dangerous and harmful practice. Being LGBTQ+ is not a mental illness and should not be treated as such. There are volumes of information available regarding the risks of conversion therapy and the ethics of practicing or endorsing such treatment. I find no basis for a bill of this nature to be brought into hearing; or moved forward out of committee.

It is well documented that the lack of acceptance for any individual by their family, friends, and the community one lives in results in increased risk of depression, self-harm, and alcohol or drug abuse. The impact of this legislation and other bills targeting LGBTQ+ people as "less than" or "broken" sends a message that we are something other than the kind of citizen that North Dakota want to call her own.

The state loses so very many talented people of all ages and professional qualifications because of efforts like these. It is not only LGBTQ+ individuals, but allies who leave the state because they feel unwelcome.

Thank you for your consideration and due diligence in researching the harm this will cause to North Dakotans and North Dakota as you work through this bill. Again, I ask that you return a DO NOT PASS on HB 1332.

Cindy Roholt
D45 – Fargo, ND