

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee

My testimony is in opposition to Senate Bill 2231. I ask that you give this bill a Do Not Pass recommendation.

Teachers have an important role in the lives of students of all ages. Learning requires a safe space where students feel comfortable. Asking students how they want to be addressed is an important way to make students feel safe and empowered. This bill will take that possibility away and for what? Because the teacher or employee feels uncomfortable using a specific name or pronouns or believes that LGBTQIA+ people do not exist?

Should the teacher not be the bigger person and be uncomfortable instead of making the students in his/her/their class uncomfortable for who they are? This bill makes bullying and cruelty legal and again for what? Because the faith or conviction of the teacher is more important than respect for the student? This bill is cruel and will cause harm. I hope the “-pro-life” legislators are okay with an increase in suicides and bullying.

Using the proper pronouns and name for a person is not political or religious. It is an act of kindness and recognizing the other as a person who deserves respect. It pains me to see that the majority of legislators in the State of North Dakota is devoid of empathy and want to make the simple act of kindness, using the name and pronoun a person asks to be used (independent of what is on the birth certificate), illegal.

Taken together this bill is harmful, therefore, deserves a Do Not Pass recommendation.

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