

As a Licensed Associate Professional Counselor in North Dakota, I urge you to oppose HB 1254.

As a mental health provider, I cannot support a bill that contributes to a community where members do not feel entitled to live the lives they are born into. More than half of transgender and nonbinary youth seriously considered suicide in the last year (Trevor Project 2022 National Survey on Youth Mental Health) and LGBTQ Youth are more than 4 times as likely to attempt suicide than their peers (Johns et al., 2019; Johns et al., 2020).

This is a direct outcome of being marginalized and discriminated against. This bill, and others that seek to further limit the LGBTQ+ community, directly contribute to the increased risk of suicide by further marginalizing this population.

I urge the committee to listen to the testimony from experts in the field, who are well versed in the standards of care for transgender individuals as the results of passing these will be costly, time consuming, and brings on increased risk for citizens, while the need for such bills is just not supported.

North Dakota banning these services will not prevent people from seeking the care they need, it just makes it harder, more expensive, and difficult for those with less privilege. Furthermore, North Dakota stands to lose economically and in the quality of health care provided as families and health care providers will move out of state to get the care they need. This will affect the well-being of all citizens.

This does not make North Dakota a desirable place to live and is not reflective of the values that most North Dakotans hold toward their friends, neighbors and family members.

North Dakota cannot afford to pass legislation that contributes to this.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 1254.