

Testimony in opposition of HB 1254

Relating to the prohibition of certain practices against a minor; to provide a penalty; and to declare an emergency.

Senate Human Services Committee March 15, 2023

Senator Lee and committee members. My name is Stephen McDonough. I am providing testimony in opposition to HB 1254.

I am a board certified pediatrician who worked in North Dakota for forty years, from 1980 to 2020. I worked at the NDDoH from 1985 to 2000 and served at times as the State Epidemiologist, AIDS/Project Director, Director of Maternal and Child Health and Chief Medical Officer. As a pediatrician, I provided primary care to LGBTQ adolescents and treated them with dignity and respect.

In 1989, the North Dakota Legislature passed AIDS/HIV legislation which balanced good public health and compassion and led our state to have the LOWEST HIV cumulative case rate in the United States for the next 30 years. We reached out to the LGBTQ community to reduce HIV transmission.

At that time there were extremist haters that called HIV the "Gay Plague" and would have been pleased if HIV wiped out the gay community. At the time, these haters were a very small minority and not a major component of a prominent political party.

Now we have a Legislature considering around 20 anti-transgender bills, all based on lies and misinformation. These terrible bills have given our state the reputation of being anti-science and one of intolerance and hate. Nearly 70 religious leaders and over 200 medical providers have recently published letters to the editor opposing these hateful bills.

This bill is not needed. This bill is state-sponsored child abuse. Transgender individuals should receive the health care that they need.

The North Dakota Legislature should not be bullying transgender individuals. HB 1254 needs to be defeated.

Stephen McDonough MD