

March 15, 2023

Dear Chair Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

My name is Rev. Karen Van Fossan. I am an ordained minister and licensed professional counselor, serving as a pastoral counselor in the state of North Dakota. **I ask that you give HB 1473 a Do Not Pass recommendation.**

A few years ago, I was adopted by a young mother and her beautiful transgender child. Having been rejected by their family of origin, they asked me to become their mom and grandma. Due to a fundamental misunderstanding about what it means to be transgender, their family had become unable to love them. As painful as this breach has been for my chosen daughter and grandchild, I believe the real losers in this scenario are the family members who don't get to experience the Halloween costumes, the spontaneous dances, and the joyful utterances (like "I love you, Grandma!") that I now enjoy as a matter of course. I do indeed love my transgender grandchild from the deepest place in my soul.

This bill would have devastating effects on my grandchild, our family, and our larger community. The American Counseling Association, my own ministerial association, and numerous respected bodies advocate for gender-affirming locker room and bathroom opportunities for people like my grandchild. Please vote on the side of my family and vote Do Not Pass on this bill.

Thank you.