

SB #2231

68th Legislative Session

Senators: Luick and Meyer. Representatives: Cory and Karls

How many of you know a transgender person? How many of you have talked to a parent of a transgender youth? I am here today in opposition to SB #2231. I am a citizen of North Dakota and a parent of a transgender person who is also a citizen of North Dakota. As a parent and a person who believes in equality for all I must tell you that this bill is unjust and uncalled for, and it is apparent that the authors of this bill have chosen to go after trans children. This bill not only discriminates against these kids but also goes to great lengths to make their life at school unbearable, humiliating and demeaning. I know first-hand how a negative school experience can harm the self-esteem and self confidence of a transgender youth, how many of you can say you have even considered the ramifications of what this bill will do to the youths of North Dakota?

People who are transgender are born this way, this is a medical fact and something that needs to be accepted and acknowledged by CIS people. You can not state DNA in your bills and yet ignore the other important science fact that an MRI proves, that the brains of transgender kids are in fact the gender that they identify as. Male brains and female brains are formed differently, and the differences are visible using an MRI. This bill punishes people who are born transgender. Is that fair? Do you plan on making a bill that punishes kids who are born blind, born with cerebral palsy, and other physical conditions that may repel you? That is the very definition of discrimination.

School is a place for learning. Here kids are taught the rules of how to interact with one another. Kids are told that inclusion is what the schools want but under this bill, that is all but impossible unless the transgender youth denies or rejects who they are just to make others comfortable. I cannot understand why an adult who knows nothing about these children would go out of his or her way to make life difficult for transgender kids. What do you think this bill tells the CIS youth of North Dakota?

Allowing a transgender youth to go to school as they see themselves hurts absolutely no one. In fact, CIS people would have an opportunity to learn as well as the faculty, staff and administration of the school. Transgender students pose as no threat to their CIS peers what so ever. My child didn't harm one person at all and yet she was a victim of a crime by a CIS peer. My child went to school and showed respect to faculty and staff, yet those same adults disrespected her day after day and continued to do so even after their actions were made known to the administration and they were warned not continue their behavior. Tell me who was the threat? Who did wrong in those cases? My child was just doing what she had to do, go to school and she did her best to learn even though the situation was made difficult not because she was confused or struggled to be her true authentic self but by those who made her school day as difficult as they could. This bill doesn't help anyone, what it does is harm the youth of North Dakota.

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This bill tells the CIS youths that people who do not look like them or are different from them do not deserve the very rights and privileges they enjoy. This bill tells CIS youths that it is ok to exclude people who are different and does not foster the skills of socializing and learning to work and live amongst those who are different from themselves. These CIS kids will grow up feeling entitled and have the false idea that this is how the world outside of North Dakota works. These CIS kids will be ill equipped to work among people of different cultures or backgrounds because they were not taught the skill of socializing in their formative years, the K-12 school years.

Not allowing transgender youths to use the pronouns, names and facilities isn't protecting anyone. By putting up these barriers, the transgender youth is put under extreme stress and mental anguish. How is using a pronoun that the transgender child identifies hurting a CIS peer? How is the child using their chosen name making the workload of faculty, staff or administration more strained? It doesn't.

The bathroom and locker room situation are really a non-issue. My daughter used these facilities and she wasn't using them to see other girls or to touch anyone. My daughter went in these rooms for the same reason as the other girls used them; to either use the toilet or to dress for gym class. It's that plain and simple. Transgender children shouldn't be forced to use a separate room to dress for gym or to use the toilet. That is exclusion. That is segregation. Haven't we learned from history that segregation is a bad thing? Why must history be repeated? Is it because adults are uncomfortable? Is it because adults have a hard time realizing that their ideas of social norms is actually false?

Our kids learn from what we model. Our kids learn from what we say at home and how we treat people. I taught my kids what Jesus taught, love and accept everyone. I taught my kids that no one is better than anyone else and to be nice. The very basics of what Christ taught is what this bill doesn't do.

You could easily be standing where I am now. You could be the parent of a transgender person, or maybe a grandparent or have a niece or nephew who is standing before a bunch of strangers, trying to make them understand that what they are doing is harmful to many kids, kids who did nothing wrong but try to live as the person they see in the mirror. No one should be forced to live as someone they aren't just to make strangers happy. Would you be happy living the life of the opposite gender just to make me happy? Would you like it if I forced your child to live as the gender I think they should be?

My child is happy and healthy living a life as her authentic self. She didn't hurt one person in doing so. I am so glad I had the insight to do what was right and help my child become who she is now. As a parent, are you willing to accept the consequence of this bill?

Kristie Miller
Parent of transgender