

DO NOT PASS bill SB 2231: Granting a person an accommodation for their perceived identity is done EVERY DAY, EVERYWHERE, IN EVERY FORUM. "Do you prefer to be addressed as Ms., Miss, or Mrs.?" You think that question has nothing to do with gender identity? And would you tell me I'm unreasonable for asking to be called Ms. Dillin, rather than Mrs.? Why would you! "Is Robert here?" "Robert is my dad, I go by Bobby." ROBERT isn't his identity. BOBBY is. Should teachers and employees refuse address a boy or a man named Daniel as Danny, at his request, because it's too "feminine" too? WHO WOULD FIGHT WITH THIS? Why do people need CODIFIED LEGAL PROTECTION FROM BEING REQUIRED TO ENGAGE IN COMMON COURTESY? What Section 2 engages in, particularly in 14-02.4-03.1 is the codification and legalization of the expression of Bigotry and Discrimination, granting SPECIAL protections to people who HATEFULLY deny a person's self-identification--there is literally no other reason for this section of the bill to exist. These are people who want to go out of their way to be RUDE (at best) to individuals they might come into contact with in the routine order of their workday. How is that in keeping with North Dakota's values? Why is that something the state wants to legally protect???

In addition, I don't know how in the WORLD this section is enforceable. How do these employees know with certainty that the person they're refusing to address by he/him pronouns is NOT, in fact, a man? Or someone assigned male at birth? Are we going to demand the people misgendered submit to genital inspections so that the RIGHT OF THE EMPLOYEE to refer to them wrongly is substantiated? And what will stop people from using this statute to bully and harass women who don't look "feminine enough" to meet their subjective standards for what a woman should be? Do you have a plan for that? Because I PROMISE YOU, it's going to happen--and now you're stripping people of their right to bodily privacy to support bigotry, harassment, and bullying between adults at work, too. How many sexual harassment lawsuits does the state want to field because of this legislation? The number will only keep growing while the state continues to reinforce and protect bullies and monsters who think it is their God Given Right to judge the gender performance and public appearance of others.

Back to the kids and school policy in 15.1-06-21: What about girls named Samantha who go by Sam? Or those little boys going by Danny and Bobby? Is that an accommodation that conflicts with their "biological sex" and assumed gender identity? My first name is Amalia. Do you know how long it took me to even learn how to spell it, because I NEVER used it, EVER, until I went off to college? I had a family nickname, and that was what everyone called me, at my request--in school and otherwise. Amalia wasn't my identity. It didn't MATTER what my birth certificate said. I chose to make it my identity, later, for purely mercenary reasons, too--because there are so few Amalias in the United States, it made me feel unique, it set me apart. It could be a conversation starter! Does that make my identity now or then less valid? Of course not. I grew and changed and made the choice for myself of who I wanted to be and how I wanted to be addressed and no one thought anything of it at any point along the way.

Further, in middle school, as time went on I was known by ANY NUMBER of different names--because THAT'S WHAT SOCIAL GROUPS DO. Changing how we address one another can indicate familiarity, friendship, and acceptance by a group! I would never have brought these names home for use with my family because I already HAD an alternative family name I was comfortable with! But those nicknames in school--they let me know I was LOVED by my friends!!! That to them, I was SPECIAL. NO ONE at ANY POINT needed to bring my parents into the conversation, when many of these names didn't indicate or support my assigned or perceived gender. Why should we be involving them in how their children choose to be addressed by their peers and their teachers now? The only reason would be to punish them, to ostracize them, to push them out and prevent them from engaging with their peers as their most authentic selves, and ensure that the state itself (through this mandate) participates in the bullying of kids who are MOST AT RISK OF SUICIDE AND MOST AT NEED OF SUPPORT AND ACCEPTANCE AS THE PEOPLE THEY KNOW THEMSELVES TO BE.

Okay, so none of those examples are pronouns. But can you see, by extension, how absolutely outrageous it is that we're trying to LEGISLATE this? What kind of nonsensical grammar policing is this???

Historically speaking, the singular they (just like the singular you) is as old as the English language. It's only relatively recently that people have taken exception to its use. Forms of address come in and out of fashion, culturally and socially its totally normal for shifts to happen over the course of any period of time. You are literally trying to fight against the NATURE OF LANGUAGE in this bill--you are the Roman Emperor Caligula, waging war against the sea. Who cares

how a person prefers to be referred to? These pronouns are just words that more specifically encompasses their identity as an individual! Just like Ms. or Bobby or Danny or Sam or people who go by Jack but are legally named John choose the form of address that most suits THEIR identity, too. THAT'S ALL ANY PRONOUN IS--a means by which to differentiate one person from another, indirectly, more precisely in regard to who they have indicated they are. And it is not my business to tell someone who they are or are not. It isn't yours, either. And it CERTAINLY is not the states right to decide for them.

I can only assume the problem the state wants to solve is that these kids might ask to be referred to by a pronoun or name in school that their parents don't know about--that maybe they're wrestling with their identity and afraid of how their family will respond. Isn't it safer for these kids to be able to engage in that exploration with the support of their peers, socially, openly, than to do it in total isolation, thinking themselves entirely alone, with no one they can trust, afraid that if they reveal themselves, they'll be made homeless by parents who don't understand? At best. When suicide rates for trans kids and LGBTQIA+ folks on the whole are so high, why would we want to drive them deeper into isolation with legislation like this? Make schools so inhospitable that they have nowhere they're allowed to exist as the people they know they are? If the state decides they aren't allowed to exist in school, and they aren't allowed to exist at home--where does that leave them? Is the state's preference, is our legislator's preference that these kids not live at all? Because if so, there's a word for that that none of us will like: it's called genocide. Thats what bills like this seem to be leading us toward.

This isn't a big leap. It's right there in the bill. NO ACCOMODATIONS ARE ALLOWED TO BE MADE FOR ANY CHILD WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF A PARENT OR GUARDIAN. And if they don't have the support of their parent or guardian, what? They just have to CEASE to be themselves entirely? Do you not understand where that leads??? You are creating, by law, a funnel for these kids that PUSHES them toward suicidal ideation, because they will have NO SAFE PLACE in which they are allowed to exist.

Don't you find that a little concerning? If you're the kid in this scenario, what are your options? How do you navigate a world that PASSED LAWS to ensure that you were denied ALL RIGHTS to be you? Even such a small thing as being referred to as they or her or ze at school, to use a bathroom where you wouldn't be bullied or beat up or harassed and attacked, or allow a club where you can engage with peers facing the same struggles. Would you do this to a kid whose nickname didn't match their perceived gender? And if you wouldn't, why would you do ALL OF THIS?

SB 2231 will kill people, and if it were my child who died as a result of this kind of a law, I'd make DARN SURE that the state was sued for its part in it. JUST LET PEOPLE LIVE THEIR LIVES, and stop being such CHILDREN about it! STOP TRYING TO POLICE PEOPLE BASED ON THEIR GENDER. IT IS NOT YOUR BUSINESS WHAT IS IN THEIR PANTS. JUST TAKE THEM AT THEIR WORD, ADDRESS THEM AS THEY ASK TO BE ADDRESSED, AND MOVE ON WITH YOUR DAY.