

My name is Jessica Rose. I am a parent of a North Dakota school-aged child, and I stand in strong opposition to SB 2231. This past year, my beautiful and amazing child told us that they wanted to change their pronouns and gender. After that admission to her family and friends, a weight seemed to lift off of their shoulders for the first time in a long time. Aside from the pronoun change, the only thing different about this incredible kiddo is they are now a target for the fear and hatred of adults. Adults who are using their time and energy trying to erase who my child is deep in their heart. Are they less of a human because of a gender change? Are they somehow less of a citizen of North Dakota because of this as well?

So far this school year, our 9-year old has been subjected to physical violence at the hands of their (former) classroom teacher, an adult who laughed directly into their face and denounced their preferred pronouns. This teacher, along with many others in the school district, have continued to mis-gender our child, along with a number of other microaggressions that no child should have to deal with. Since the beginning of this school year, our child's feelings of worth and safety at school have dropped significantly. Suicidal ideation and negative self-talk suddenly became part of the discussion – not because they struggle with who they are as a person, but because others struggle with who they are as a person.

My beautiful and amazing child is worthy of respect and safety and the right to live as they choose just like every other cisgender person in North Dakota. That being said, I am a resident of Minnesota and am fully prepared to remove my child from North Dakota schools. There is no reason to support a system that harms my child and other children like them.

I implore you to kill this bill immediately. Thank you for your time.