

I hope that you will take your position seriously and make data-driven decisions around the several bills which are clearly **driven by transphobia and ignorance**. I know you are very busy and want to share with you the definitive data on the impact that these bills may have on the health, safety, and support of trans children in our community. I ask you to consider – who do these bills benefit? What evidence do we have that these bills are necessary? There is no data to support the need for these bills and most of the arguments presented are grounded in personal anecdotes and not science or truth.

I am a professor and scholar in health equity and health services research. I have been a resident of North Dakota for decades and grew up in East Grand Forks enjoying the recreation and opportunities available in North Dakota, only two miles from my home. I serve on several boards, foundations, and working groups in the state serving our community, and doing my best to use the privilege I have been awarded to advocate for those who are not being heard.

Currently, in North Dakota, our children are not being heard, and more concerning, it is the children who are at the greatest risk of abuse, neglect, and suicide. These are our transgender youth. Children who are not accepted in their communities, classrooms, or by a majority of those in leadership positions like yourself (though not necessarily you specifically, those proposing these bills). I have two children ages 9 and 11 in public school in ND – a biological male and bio female. Neither are transgender, and neither are threatened by the idea of supporting their peers who may be.

You must vote no on SB 2231

Data to support your vote of NO:

- “Data indicate that 82% of transgender individuals have considered killing themselves and 40% have attempted suicide, with suicidality highest among transgender youth.”¹
- “Logistic regressions indicated that models for both lifetime suicide attempts and suicidality were significant. Interpersonal microaggressions, made a unique, statistically significant contribution to lifetime suicide attempts and emotional neglect by family approached significance. School belonging, emotional neglect by family, and internalized self-stigma made a unique, statistically significant contribution to past 6-month suicidality.”¹

WHAT THIS MEANS: Passing bills like SB 2231 directly target children IN THEIR SCHOOLS and in their HOMES and PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS will have an impact on the mental health and suicidality of trans youth.

Using a student’s preferred pronoun is no different than using their preferred name or nickname. It validates their identity, harms no one, but provides immeasurable support and protection for the student. I implore you to listen to the testimony and recognize that those in favor of the dozen transphobic bills proposed this session have not presented data nor factual science, nor are their sources law reviews, peer reviewed medical journals, nor direct evidence of the need for these bills for North Dakota. Conversely, those opposed HAVE presented data and previous interpretations of law. They are lawyers, health professionals, mental health professionals, superintendents, and persons with lived experience. I also remind you about the separation of church and state as many in favor of these bills have based them on a foundation of religion, which is not constitutional.

If you have additional questions or would like data as you make your decisions, please do not hesitate to connect with me.

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