

North Dakota House Political Subdivisions Committee
North Dakota Legislative Assembly
600 E Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58505

January 27, 2025

Re: VOTE NO on HB 1273

Dear Chair Longmuir and Members of the Political Subdivisions Committee:

My name is Anastassiya Andrianova, and I am a naturalized US citizen born in Ukraine, who has resided in the state of North Dakota since January 2014 and was sworn in as a citizen at the Fargo Sanctuary Events Center on June 6, 2017.

As someone who has lived, gone to school, and/or worked in different countries and different parts of the nation, I am extremely aware of the importance of free speech; however, I am also aware of the necessary limitations on free speech that ensure the operation of civil society. Therefore, I urge you to **oppose HB 1273** – a bill relating to the prohibition of a policy, order, or ordinance that limits free speech.

According to the proposed House Bill No. 1273, “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the state or a political subdivision may not adopt or implement a policy, order, or ordinance that limits or prohibits speech of an individual, **including hate crime ordinances.**”

I specifically urge you to **strike out “hate crime ordinances”** that disguise this discriminatory bill as one meaning to protect free speech.

The First Amendment protects the freedom of speech, but it is not absolute. Hate ordinances are in place for a reason. Just as you can’t shout “Fire!” in a crowded theater, you should not be permitted to use hateful language or commit crimes against any person due to their actual or perceived race, national origin, or ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. In June 2021, the Fargo City Commission enacted hate crime ordinances. These serve to protect the diverse community of our city and also to deter any future hateful behavior.

Taking “hate crimes” out of the constitution will *not* end hate crimes in the community. It will, however, fester hostility, anger, and resentment and empower public, vocal displays of bigotry. These are not North Dakota values.

Vote DO NOT PASS on HB 1273.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Anastassiya Andrianova, immigrant and concerned naturalized citizen
District 11 - Fargo, ND