

January 27, 2025

Chairman Longmuir and members of the Political Subdivision Committee:

I am writing as a North Dakota citizen to ask that you vote to oppose HB 1273 as written.

I am a strong supporter of our right to free speech and am happy to see the ND Legislature is too, but I am extremely concerned that this bill specifically says that hate crime ordinances cannot be enacted or upheld. I believe that North Dakotans would (and should) do all that they can to discourage hate crimes including hate speech.

Freedom of speech is an integral part of our country but was never intended to include speech which could cause harm. The freedom of speech does not include that which may “incite imminent violence against a group, or might be reasonably interpreted as an immediate threat to do harm” according to a 2017 article in the *Los Angeles Times*..

I understand that hate speech is included in our right to free speech, but to intentionally include hate crime is a dangerous path and a disgraceful precedent to set for our state. I urge you to recommend removing the words “including hate crime ordinances” on line 9.

Finally, I ask that you consider some other bills which you may be hearing in the near future which aim to remove content from library shelves and consider what passing this bill along with those bills could say about our state. In my mind, it says that we are more comfortable allowing hate crimes than we are allowing books with sex scenes to be in our rural libraries.

Please, do not approve HB 1273 as it is.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Anderson

Burlington, ND