

## HB 1273 Testimony

Chairmen Longmuir and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

My name is Sargianna Wutzke and I am asking for a Do Not Pass on HB 1273. I am a member of the Bismarck Human Relations Committee and in 2022 our committee testified in support of the Hate Crime Ordinance in the city of Bismarck.

Hate Crime Ordinances are how two cities in North Dakota have shown they prioritize the safety of all people and that all people deserve to be treated with respect regardless of a person's differences. Bias/Hate crimes are committed against a person based on actual or perceived race, color, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origins or ancestry of the victim. Too often people think that bias/hate related crimes do not occur in North Dakota. This is not the case. In fact, North Dakota has ranked as high as second in the nation for the highest number of hate crimes per capita according to FBI statistics.

One example of a hate crime happened in Grand Forks. A Somali restaurant in Grand Forks was firebombed by a man who targeted that restaurant because the owners were Somali. Three days prior to the firebombing there was a Nazi Style symbol painted on the restaurant with the words "go home". This crime was one of hate that targeted the people who owned the restaurant due to them being from Somalia.

I work at an agency that provides services to people with developmental disabilities. Hate Crimes for people with developmental disabilities is the invisible hate crime. Many times, people with developmental disabilities are not always thought of being a protected category. According to the ARC between 2017 and 2019, there was a 35% increase in hate crimes based on disability.

According to the proposed HB 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 urge you to strike out the words including hate crime ordinances. Hate crime ordinances are in place in our cities to protect people and should remain in place.

Sargianna Wutzke

Bismarck, ND