

Testimony Prepared for the
House Human Services Committee
March 10, 2025

By: Jennifer Boeckel
Chairperson of the North Dakota Board of Social Examiners

RE: House Bill 1430

Chairperson Lee and Senate Human Services Committee members, my name is Jennifer Boeckel and I am the Chair of the North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners. The NDBSWE tried to get a special meeting to approve testimony but we were unable to attain quorum. Therefore I am testifying today in opposition to House Bill 1430 not as Chair but as a licensed professional social worker. I believe that NDBSWE would support this testimony as it is very similar to what we submitted to the House Human Service Committee in January.

On June 8, 2021, The North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners testified before Administration Rules Committee regarding the updating of North Dakota Board of Social Workers Administrative Rules. The updated Administrative Rules included language indicating the practice of conversion therapy is an ethical violation for licensed social workers.

As you all are aware, on that day in June of 2021, public comment was taken, testimony was given, and a vote was held. The North Dakota Administrative Rules Committee voted to approve the change as presented—making it an ethical violation for a social worker to practice conversion therapy in the state of North Dakota. Many hours of research by the North Dakota Board went into writing the administrative rules. That research included the reading of many professional associations' stances on conversion therapy. The National Association of Social Workers, the American Medical Association, the Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, the American Psychological Association, and the American College of Physicians all state that conversion therapy is harmful and no scientific evidence exists to support its use. Furthermore, all declared that the practice of conversion therapy caused irreparable harm to those individuals who were forced to endure it.

The Administrative Rules Committee heard the testimony and approved the language in the rewrite of the Administrative Code pertaining to Social Workers.

I am concerned that the sponsors would dismiss the recommendations of the board and bring a knowingly harmful bill forward. I urge you make a do not pass recommendation on House Bill 1430 as it is written. Thank you.