

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you in opposition of HCR 3013 to re-define the definition of marriage to between a man and a woman. I can speak personally on this topic, since I have been happily married to my wife for 5 years. We have two beautiful children (3.5 and 2 yo) and have lived in ND for the last 7 years. We add value to the state of North Dakota by being active, responsible, dedicated, and committed members of the community, consistently upholding the values that foster growth and support for all.

Re-defining marriage as solely between a man and a woman would be a step backward, limiting progress toward a more inclusive, accepting future where all individuals are free to love and commit without facing discrimination or societal barriers.

If this bill were to move forward, it could lead to significant repercussions, including the loss of legal protections for same-sex couples in areas such as insurance benefits, end-of-life decisions, and child custody, while invalidating the marriages of those already in same-sex unions, leaving them vulnerable to legal and financial challenges. I do not feel that the repercussions have been considered and rather the focus is on pushing some of the representatives' agendas on everyone to restore their old-school, and small-minded beliefs.

Love is a beautiful gift, and not everyone has the opportunity to experience it. Instead of wasting resources on limiting people's rights to love whomever they choose, let's shift our focus to addressing the real issues facing North Dakota that truly deserves our time, attention and resources.

Arthur Schaper mentioned in his testimony that "it is children who suffer" when marriage is not defined as between a man and a woman. In 2024 only 70% of children are being raised in a two-parent household. There is no guarantee that in these two-parent households both parents are equally an active participant, creating a positive and enriching environment for their children. I hope that everyone can agree that the most important thing in a child's life is being loved and raised in a caring, safe and supportive environment. I can speak personally to this, being raised by a single mother. That was a better option than my parents staying together, with me growing up in a home where I would witness domestic violence and abuse, despite having both a mom and dad present. He also said "strong families are the backbone of a strong nation". It takes an insurmountable amount of strength to build a family as a same sex couple. From fertility help to financial strains to physical and emotional rollercoasters, same sex (and opposite sex) couples who start the daunting journey of fertility help are the perfect examples of "strong families" as it takes strength, courage, hope, and perseverance. Arthur also said that "there is no evidence that individuals are born homosexual", I argue that there is no evidence that individuals are

born heterosexual, or republican or democratic, ect. The point is erroneous. Lastly he said “this is not the live and let live society that we were promised”. The idea behind that saying is; an expression that means allowing others to live their lives as they choose, without interference or judgment. It promotes tolerance, respect for individual freedom, and the idea that people should coexist peacefully, even if their lifestyles or beliefs differ from one's own. It seems that his interpretation of the saying was misguided.

We are your medical professionals, teachers, church members, children, aunts/uncles, volunteers, neighbors, tax-payers, coaches, ect. Who we love does not change that. I strongly encourage you to vote no on HCR 3013 to redefine marriage as between a man and a woman.

Nicole Jefferson

West Fargo, ND