

Thank you for this opportunity to make this submission in opposition to HB 1198.

HB 1198 should be rejected.

I have a Ph.D. in Rhetoric from Duquesne University (Pittsburgh, PA). Some people *might* consider me an “expert” in communication. However, with this educational background, I write as here a citizen of the United States and a resident of North Dakota. I do not speak for Dickinson State University or the North Dakota University System.

Although the parameters of open records laws and procedures should always be a matter of legitimate debate, North Dakota certainly should not move away from the possibility of anonymous open records requests. Folks from across the political spectrum should oppose HB 1198. For a range of possible circumstances, there are situations in which one or more anonymous requests could be practically necessary. Taking this option off the table is a major step away from the transparency, accountability, and scrutiny that we claim to prioritize in North Dakota. Those persons who make claims/allegations regarding malfeasance in delicate situations, including workplace situations, need adequate avenues of obtaining evidence to support such claims/allegations.

HB 1198 should be rejected.

Like with HB 1446 (the tenure bill), from my point of view, there is good reason to believe that this bill reflects efforts to avoid facing trouble and accountability within the North Dakota University System. This has been my own viewpoint from the start (when learning about HB 1198). Dustin Gawrylow has provided some big picture connections to consider that pertain to HB 1198. As part of my testimony submission, I include his recent article in its entirety.

“Is there a legislative agenda to silence whistleblowers at Dickinson State University?”

Dustin Gawrylow, January 21, 2023

North Dakota’s Watchdog Update (North Dakota Watchdog Network)

<https://watchingnd.substack.com/p/is-there-a-legislative-agenda-to>

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