

March 14, 2023

RE: Opposition to HB 1254

Dear Chair Lee and Members of the Senate Human Services Committee:

My husband and I grew up in rural Central North Dakota. We have strong North Dakota work ethics and spiritual values. We have spent our careers contributing to and promoting of the agricultural economy and technical education of our State. We are proud of our heritage. We likely live our life like most of you.

We are also parents of a transgender young adult. We never anticipated navigating this journey as a family. It is a journey not taken lightly or in haste. You have heard the statistics from the medical professionals providing testimony to DO NOT PASS. We lived in fear of losing our child for a long time. Once the dysphoria was disclosed, our child knew with 100% conviction who they are and have not waived once in the past 8 years. We educated ourselves and our child for many years. We counseled with over 19 different medical experts from psychiatrists, phycologists, counselors, family practitioners, endocrinologists, fertility, religious leaders, school administrators and adult transgender human beings in various stages or years in and post transition along with other families. We read and watched materials from all sides of the issue, including pouring over medial studies from sources around the globe. We took the transition slow, as directed by the many professionals caring for our family and always trusting our hearts and minds as parents who love without condition. We have witnessed the agony of living misaligned between brain and body and how the staggering statistics you read and hear about from experts on rates of depression and harm can drop substantially by having one trusted adult and a proper support network around them – community, access to proper medical and therapy teams. We have also witnessed the devastating impact of what living misaligned and without support or under intentional rejection can have on a person that by no fault of their own was born this way. Trust us as parents, no one would choose to live this life. No parent or transgender person navigates this journey without caution and care. No one wants to feel outside themselves, told by your “home” that you are not valued, you are not wanted, you are not deserving of the same basic rights and care of the broader community.

Attempts to erase human beings that are different than the cultural ideation of normal have always proven to be the wrong moral choice throughout history. We invite you to place fear aside and get to know a family living this life. Access to proper care saved the life of our child, who is thriving, involved in community, and a contributing tax payer to the State of North Dakota.

Please, give others the chance at a productive and fulfilling life. **Do not pass HB 1254.**

Thank you sincerely for reading our story,

Tara Jensen

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