

CONCERNED
WOMEN *for* AMERICA
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

January 27, 2023
House Human Services Committee
Testimony in Support of HB 1144

Chairman Matthew Ruby and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Linda Thorson, State Director for Concerned Women for America (CWA) of North Dakota, testifying for Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee. I am here today on behalf of our North Dakota members in support of HB 1144.

Concerned Women for America, the state's largest public policy women's organization, has as its mission to protect and promote Biblical values and Constitutional principles through prayer, education, and advocacy. We strongly support the provisions in HB 1144; it meets our goal of providing quality education to a level of excellence in academic achievement. Enabling schools to designate a restroom or shower room on school grounds exclusively for males or females and eliminating multi-stall gender-neutral restrooms and shower rooms is beneficial to all students.

Women and girls have valid concerns about privacy and safety in intimate spaces; forcing underage girls to share bathrooms and shower rooms with gender-confused boys is wrong and creates an unsafe school climate for all students. Lawmakers and the governor understood the need to protect female students and [passed a law](#) last session, preventing boys from using girls' restrooms. Sadly, female students in our state are still put in harm's way because some school districts have chosen to disobey the law.

Days after the law passed in 2023, requiring school districts to establish, with approval of the parent or legal guardian, a plan for the use of a separate restroom accommodation for transgender students, the [superintendent](#) of the third largest public school district in the state publically announced the district would not follow the state law.

Education is of little value unless virtue, truth, and integrity are included as part of the learning environment. Best practices in education involve enriching a child's academic skills during a critical time of development of right and wrong. School administrators publically flaunting their intention to break state law sets a very bad example for children.

Comprehensive character education is "the deliberate effort to cultivate virtue."¹ Students spend nearly 900 hours a year in school; schools must develop [respectful environments](#) where students learn core, ethical values, such as being law-abiding citizens.

According to [leading educational researchers](#), learning environments play a significant role in student success. Enhanced learning environments include communicating high expectations. When people in positions of authority in a student's life openly commit to not following state law, not only children but society is harmed.

In conclusion, people fall into three groups: children, those who protect children, and those who bring harm to children. Thankfully, in 2023, a great majority of our lawmakers and Gov. Doug Burgum were willing to protect children by passing legislation to prevent gender-confused boys from using girls' restrooms. HB 1144 strengthens the law and provides a penalty for school leaders who not only choose to put underaged girls in harm's way but teach students that unlawful behavior is permissible.

Please vote "do pass" on 1144.

ⁱ Lickona, Thomas (2004), Character Matters: How to Help Our Children Develop Good Judgement, Integrity, and Other Essential Virtues. New York: Touchstone