

Thank you for your service on the Rapid City Area School Board. Your time and efforts on behalf of our students is greatly valued and appreciated. I am Norman Woods, Executive Director of the Family Heritage Alliance and I am writing to you today regarding the upcoming consideration of the Western Dakota Tech (WDT) Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

You may have heard that our organization has concerns with the proposed updates to WDT Policy #2005, specifically the addition of gender identity to the list of protected classes, and I wanted to take a minute to introduce myself and give you an explanation of our concerns. We believe that no one should be harassed or exploited, and we would never advocate for the victimization of any group of people. Our concern stems from the fact that adding gender identity to the list of protected classes often has unintended consequences.

I have attached the petition we have been circulating which outlines the four reasons we are advocating for the removal of "gender identity" from the list of changes. I won't go into the legal, scientific or privacy concerns, as they are explained in the petition. However, I do want to address an ethical aspect of this change. It is what we believe to be the unintended consequences. Adding gender identity to the list of protected classes essentially silences anyone who disagrees with a person's claim of gender identity opposite of their biological sex. Consider the following scenarios:

1. If a person who is biologically male (and identifies as female) uses a restroom facility designated for females, any female who expresses discomfort with that action would be told they are discriminating.
2. If a person who is biologically female (and identifies as male) is given overnight accommodations with a male, that male would be told they are discriminating if they expressed discomfort with the accommodations.
3. If a person believes male and female are unchangeable, and chooses not to use the preferred pronouns of the transitioning individual, they could be accused of harassment even when no harassment was intended.

Please note that these three scenarios are not purely hypothetical; as similar situations have actually occurred.

Our position can be summarized as this: Adding Gender identity to the list of protected classes takes a highly debated issue and labels any disagreement as discrimination. If gender identity is added to the policy, anybody that disagrees with, or feels their rights have been violated by, a person with who identifies contrary to their biological sex, will be told they are discriminating and harassing.

Please don't silence a discussion of this magnitude by adding a policy that is inconsistent with scientific evidence and current law.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Norman Woods, Executive Director  
Family Heritage Alliance Action