



22 February 2017

Governor Doug Burgum  
Office of Governor  
State of North Dakota  
600 East Boulevard Avenue  
Bismarck ND, 58505-0001

Dear Governor Burgum,

On behalf of Amnesty International—a global, nonpartisan organization dedicated to protecting the human rights of all people—I urge you in the strongest terms possible to veto the following bills that would undermine the rights to peaceful protest and freedom of expression:

HB 1293: Relating to trespassing  
HB 1304: Wearing masks  
HB 1426: Relating to riot offenses

If HB 1193 passes through the Senate, we strongly urge you to veto this bill as well.

Repressive governments such as those in China and Iran are well known for passing laws in the name of security and safety that are used to prevent people from exercising their human rights to peaceful protest and freedom of expression. We are counting on you to ensure that the State of North Dakota does not do the same.

Under the U.S. Constitution and international law, it is the legitimate right of people to peacefully express their opinion, including by taking to the streets in peaceful protests and assemblies. Government authorities in all countries have an obligation to facilitate—not hinder—these rights.

The bills listed above would contradict this obligation and negatively impact these important Constitutional and international rights. The bills could be used to punish people simply for exercising their legitimate rights; may have a chilling effect on the decision to exercise these rights; appear to discriminatorily target Indigenous Peoples and their allies opposed to the Dakota Access Pipeline; and could put law enforcement officers in the untenable position of implementing laws that may undermine fundamental rights and freedoms.

The eyes of the world are watching. Show your commitment to the U.S. Constitution and human rights by vetoing these bills.

Sincerely,

Emily Walsh  
Campaigner, Individuals at Risk  
Amnesty International USA