

Letter of Opposition to HB 1298

Dear Chairman Weisz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sheila Williams. I am the mother of a transgender youth. I am writing this letter of opposition because I feel it would set all the progress of our Trans youth back to the beginning of their journey. Because a Trans youth and their peers have for the most part accepted the changes that have transpired. Now to participate in sports, they would have to confuse everyone by participating in their choice of sport based on what they used to be, not whom they are now.

As a mother experiencing this pursuit of personal truth in my child was quite a lot to take in. And it seemed like at the school level it was even more pronounced. These kids started out seeing my child as one sex and then had to accept them as the sex they found themselves to be as their journey moved forward. There was obviously a lot of bullying from the other kids at first. Then as they saw our child's progress some tended towards bullying, most tended towards let them be who they are. We saw some teachers who tended to want to shame and blame because of their inability to accept this was happening. It seemed to, as we were able to share what we had learned. Most began to come around and find it was quite easy to teach a Trans person once they got out of their own way.

I witnessed my child having to struggle with who they were on the inside and the shame because of what they looked like on the outside. This led to self-harm and constant thoughts of suicide because of being stuck in the middle between their truth and what others felt they needed to be, to be acceptable and included in friendships and as a classmate. Thankfully, there was orchestra. And an acceptance amongst the musicians and faculty, which greatly helped them cope with the other.

When my child entered middle school, they decided to go out for sports after school. Because of the desire to participate. This led to a lot of confidence building and the ability to surprise themselves with reaching for goals they did not feel were possible. It taught them to work hard and practice hard. One coach even commented that they were amazed that our child seemed to be one of the hardest working people out there on the field. First one out and last one to leave. Even though they are only where able to participate for two years because of a nagging injury. It still instilled some great values which would have been almost impossible otherwise.

This was made possible by a school athletics policy of inclusion without bias, shaming or exclusion because of one's outward appearance.

As a parent that has a child that really hopes to again before high school ends participate in a sport.

I am asking that the committee recommend a Do not Pass on House Bill 1298

Sincerely – Sheila Williams

