

Testimony by Ella M Gilkerson

To The Sentate Judiciary Committee

In Opposition of HB 1298

Tuesday March 16th

My name is Ella Gilkerson, and I am writing as a student and the President of Century Highschool's HERO club, which advocates for the rights of LGBTQ+ students in our school, in our community, and in our state. I strongly urge you vote AGAINST this bill. While the intention of this bill is to protect students who were assigned female at birth from being hurt in a sport by those who were assigned male at birth, it has consequences which fall back on an entirely innocent group of people. No matter your personal views on the matter of transgenderism, it is an undeniable fact that we have to put aside our differences and our biases to help make our state a safer place for all of its inhabitants, which is ultimately the purpose of the legislative system. Passing this bill would have incredibly negative effects on the mental health of our students. This is because it sets a precedent. It sets a precedent for how the State of North Dakota will treat it's students, and ultimately shows that the legislators of North Dakota don't care about the mental health of North Dakota Youth.

The unintended consequences of this bill go even farther than that. Because of the conditions of the bill, many sports organizations would no longer be able to come to North Dakota to compete. For example, the Olympic Trials would no longer be able to use North Dakota Facilities, because it would mean that highschool sports can no longer use the same facilities. It means that many sports organizations will have to choose between disallowing people to compete or closing down in order to make the facility available to other people. This is an incredibly underhanded measure to try and prevent even adults in North Dakota from

competing in sports. In the end, the decision of who can be on a team should be left up to individual coaches and sports organizations.

Another important issue with this bill is the sexist double standard it enforces. It implies that all people who are assigned female at birth are less physically fit than those who are assigned male at birth. It's a very harmful assumption. Many women are stronger than many men, and just because it also goes the other way, doesn't give anyone a basis to pass a bill like this which discriminates against an entirely innocent people. No matter how you look at it, it is in the best interest of the Youth of North Dakota to vote in opposition of this bill.