

HB 1298

Testimony in opposition from Sen. Joan Heckaman

Good afternoon, Chairman and Committee Members:

I am Senator Joan Heckaman from D-23 and am here to voice my opposition to HB 1298. While you will hear a lot of testimony today, I wanted to raise a couple of points for the committee to consider as you work on this bill.

1. I believe this bill will do the opposite of the intentions of the bill sponsor. Instead of providing more opportunities for young ladies to participate in sports, a lot of those opportunities are sponsored by organizations that have non-discrimination language in their by-laws and policies. Thus, a number of events sponsored through or by organizations with national connections will not be possible in North Dakota.
2. Skill levels vary, even within an age group. Young ladies in grade level activities do not all have the same skill levels as their peers, nor do they all have the same body structure. That is not a negative thing. That is just the way kids are.
3. Pointing this out as a Title IX issue begs the question of whether the committee has really studied what Title IX involves. Title IX started as a much broader model of inclusiveness and non-discrimination throughout our schools and involves the rights of boys/young men as well as girls/young women. I would invite this committee to look further into Title IX.
4. And finally, there have been no applications for individuals to enter the protocol to participate as a transgender individual through the North Dakota High School Activities Association according to their Director, Matt Fetch.

Chairman Larson, thank you for your time today and I recommend a Do Not Pass recommendation on HB 1298.