



## **RE: House Bill 1298**

Chairman and members of Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 1298. For the record, I am Tamara Uselman, Ed.D., and I am presenting this testimony in opposition of House Bill 1298 based on five simple reasons.

First, HB 1298 is an example of poor sportsmanship toward a student group in North Dakota who is often already alienated. The Bill sends a harsh message of exclusion to transgender students, a group already more likely to consider, attempt, and succeed at suicide. The 2019 North Dakota Youth Risk Survey data for queer youth showed of this group: 61.6% seriously considered suicide; 48.5% had made a plan; and 33.3% attempted suicide. These are North Dakota's children. The ND Legislature is called to support an at-risk student group rather than subject them to further alienation.

Next, any issues regarding transgender participation have been and shall continue to be best solved at the local level by the school's activity director and coaches. School staff know their students as individual human beings by face and name. Local leaders are situated to provide careful guidance in a way those at levels of public government further from the school cannot.

Third, medical science calls bunk on any fear of advantage for transgender students. North Dakota pediatricians find no advantage for trans students on the court or field because trans athletes must be in hormone therapy to participate.

Fourth, it is worth remembering students who are male, female, and transgender already participate in the same physical education classes in school with no catastrophic results reported.

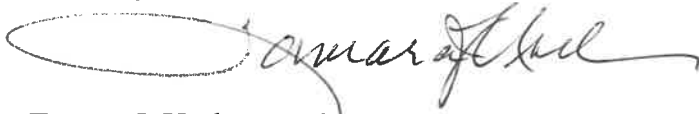
Finally, trans athletes have been able to complete in the Olympics since 2004 and in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) activities since 2011. If ND's trans children are barred from high school activities, their access to athletics at college, as a career, and in community life is effectively denied unless trans students are expected to deny who they are.

In closing, the North Dakota Legislature and all North Dakotans can and should be proud of the investments made in young people, both in the classroom and in the co- and extra-curricular activity programs. Activity programs have always existed to build *even* better young people, providing youth opportunity to practice the democratic skills of cooperation and competition.

House Bill 1298 stands in contrast to ND's solid legacy of investment in young people. For these reasons, **I support a Do NOT Pass recommendation on House Bill 1298.**

Thank you for your time and attention as you deliberate how to best serve all North Dakota's school children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tamara J. Uselman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

Tamara J. Uselman, Ed.D.  
Director of Equity & Inclusion  
Fargo Public Schools, Fargo ND