

RE: Opposition to HB 1298

Good Morning Chairman Weisz and Committee Members:

My name is Francis M. Galbraith and I am a resident of Grand Forks, North Dakota. I have lived here from 1994 to 1998, and from 2002 to the present time. I am writing to you in opposition of HB 1298.

I am not a native of North Dakota, but have made it my home. I am originally from New Jersey and moved here when I joined the US Air Force and decided to remain with my family after I retired from active service. In all of my years here, it always amazed me how the people of this state can rally together in times of adversity and are always ready to help a neighbor in need. This state had shown me the heart and character that I respected and drew me to remain here. That is why I am shocked at the level of discrimination I now see becoming more prevalent today.

When I was growing up, I played many sports through high school and heard the same insults that were thrown around on every boys/men's athletic field: "You hit like a girl!", "you run like a girl!" , "Don't be a B\*\*\*\*\*!". Even in my time in the service, similar insults were thrown around and after 22 years of serving our country and through multiple tours overseas including Iraq, it always surprised me. I can tell you in high school I knew many cisgender girls/women who could out throw, hit, or run cisgender boys/men. Even our baseball team, trying to show off against the softball team, I saw many hitters struck out by the softball pitchers. I knew cisgender girls/women who could out kick our place kickers and punters on the football team.

In the military, I had the honor of serving with some of the bravest and toughest women there are. These women could take whatever was thrown at them and keep moving. I also knew many members who were LGBTQIA+ and there was never a doubt of their strength. Despite the image of the "tough" men of the military, there were many of us who it didn't matter what gender someone was. All that mattered was they were there doing the job and, when needed, bringing the fight to the enemy. That is what truly mattered.

This bill is doing nothing for the state and the athletes it involves, but pushing them down and making them see that in the eyes of the community, they are nothing. This cannot and should not be allowed! We need to show the future generations that we have advanced beyond old prejudices. What determines a person is not their genitalia or what society tells them they are. It is their strength of character and heart and this bill shows that there are some amongst you and this state, who are lacking in those areas. These athletes are not the issue but the underlying fear of change and that is what causes a society to fall.

I urge you to vote NO on this bill and show this country that North Dakota is a place that is inclusive and judges you on the strength of your drive, character and heart and NOT by gender!

Thank you,

Francis M. Galbraith

