

1/20/23

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislature,

I have researched and taught gender studies in a higher education setting for almost ten years. In this testimony, I am speaking for myself in response to HB 1249, and not for the institution by which I am employed.

Trans kids exist. Trying to ban the existence of certain people will not and cannot work. Regarding whether trans girls should be allowed to play on girls' sports teams, the answer is yes. First, school sports are intended for children to engage in meaningful competition, and bodies vary. While it is true that many men are stronger than many women, that is not always the case, and there are, of course, many other factors involved in what gives athletes advantages—speed, skill, flexibility, and even what hand is dominant. Significant natural physiological variations exist within each sex, so trans women athletes do not have a guaranteed advantage over cis women athletes. Second, forcing transgender girls to play on the boys' teams (or vice versa) would be incredibly damaging to their mental health and self-esteem, especially because they might already feel marginalized and different. To conclude, scientific evidence demonstrates that the “fear” of trans girls having an unfair advantage is an unfounded nonfactor that would cause real and tangible harm to transgender children in our state. Please, let's be better than this, North Dakota.