

House Human Services Committee members:

I am a lifelong resident of North Dakota, raising 3 children in Minot and watching 2 grandchildren grow up in our city. I am writing to ask for a Do Not Pass on HB 1249, which bans transgender students from competing on the team that aligns with their gender identity. This is very similar to a bill that was voted on two years ago, which did not become law, and has the same issues that were present at that time.

If we start with the definition used to determine which sports team an individual could participate with, I would like to point out that the biology of sex/gender is not as simple and straightforward as some would have you believe (XY Chromosomes). It is a complex system that involves chromosomes, genes, neurobiology and endocrinology. I know it may be hard for those of us from a different generation to understand, but I think it is important to look at the science of today, which gives us a much better understanding of this complicated system.

This bill is again a non-issue and a bill to address a problem that does not exist in our state. The NDHSAA has a policy in place to address transgender athletes who wish to compete on a team that they identify with. I have not been aware of any problems with transgender female or male athletes competing against and unfairly beating cisgender athletes in our state. In fact, I am not aware of any transgender athletes competing in any sport in our state. The cisgender female athletes as well as the coaches that I know personally do not have a problem with the NDHSAA policy and do not see the need for this bill. I am tired of our state legislators wasting time and taxpayers' money to make a law to address a non-existent problem.

I have heard people argue that transgender female athletes always have an advantage over cisgender female athletes due to an increased level of testosterone, red blood cells, and muscle mass in the body. This could be an issue for an adult athlete who did not transition until they were past puberty, but there is no documented evidence that young transgender female athletes have an unfair advantage with cisgender athletes. The research I have seen that showed an advantage for transgender athletes was done on adult elite, highly trained athletes who didn't start hormone suppressing therapy until they had already achieved their maximum testosterone levels, muscle mass and red blood cells. Studies have also shown that there is a dramatic decrease in these when the athlete starts using estrogen. A young middle school or high school athlete would not have the same level of male hormone in their body when they start puberty blocking therapy at a younger age.

Contrary to some legislator's views, this bill does go against Title IX, is discriminatory and will make our state open to lawsuits. The financial implications of this bill could be enormous as well as the fact that our state will be known as one that discriminates against a group of young people who have already experienced enough struggles in their young lives. I know young people and their families who are ready to leave our state because of the perception that everyone here is homophobic and transphobic. Please note that 30% of transgender youth in our state have contemplated suicide. With all of the bills attacking sexual and gender identity this session, it will make these young people more vulnerable to depression and suicidal thoughts. National businesses are aware of this and will not want to consider setting up shop in our state.

Playing sports can provide student-athletes with important lessons about self-discipline, teamwork, success and failure as well as giving them the opportunity to improve their physical

and mental health. Playing on a team also provides a chance to meet other children and form lifelong friends. It teaches the importance of hard work, respect and acceptance of others. All students, including those who are transgender, deserve access to all of these benefits and the people who should be setting these guidelines and addressing the issue of transgender athletes participating in a sport should be educators and coaches, not legislators with a political agenda.

I find this bill to be discriminatory and a waste of taxpayers' dollars. I ask that you give this bill a Do Not Pass.

Thank you for your time,

Jane Hirst
Minot, ND