

Testimony of Mia Halvorson

In Opposition of HB 1489: “Relating to requiring institutions of higher education designating athletic teams and sports for male, female, or coed participation and limitations on use of governmental property for athletic events.”

January 24th, 2023

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Mia Halvorson, and I am currently a North Dakota resident and undergraduate student taking classes at both North Dakota State University and Minot State University. I am double majoring in Human Development Family Science, and Social Work, with an emphasis on women and gender studies, our youth, and marginalized communities.

This bill is quite similar to what HB 1298 was in 2021 and what HB 1249 is now, an attempt to ban transgender women from women's athletics. This bill, however, directly targets the collegiate level. Legislatures stated this was an up-and-coming "trend" coming to North Dakota. It has been two years, and we have not seen trans athletes making top headlines in women's sports within our state. Why? Because even if we had trans women participating in women's athletics here in North Dakota, trans women do not have an advantage per NCAA requirements.

NCAA policy is currently changing to require not only the calendar year of hormone replacement therapy, but the NCAA now requires testing regarding testosterone levels to ensure they are within the cisfemale range. I recognize the adjustments the NCAA is making, but the outright ban is unnecessary. If this dangerous bill becomes law, this law is likely to be blocked by courts. This blockage means taxpayer money gets spent attempting to defend something that does not exist. This passage potentially entails major sporting events and tournaments to divert to other states. Overall, this becomes a waste of money for our state residents. That is taxpayer money we can spend working on actual issues within our state, including combating inflation, as many see as an issue within our state and our country.

The closest example I can think to compare is former University of Penn swimmer Lia Thomas, a swimmer that many considered a hot topic last year. For anyone who wants to argue that the transgender swimmer Lia Thomas has an advantage, I would love for you to look at her stats before and after starting HRT (hormone replacement therapy).

Lia Thomas began taking HRT in May 2019, and her times started to drop with it. During transition (NCAA required one calendar year of HRT before allowance to participate in women's athletics. That forced Lia Thomas to continue participating in the men's division as her times dropped. Below are her times in events pre-transition, while transitioning, and post-transition.

Her 500 FR swim time:

- First Season: 4:20.97 (minutes: seconds) (Ranked #97)
- Pre-transition: 4:18.72 (Ranked #65)

- During transition: 4:36.57 (Ranked #568)
- Post-transition: 4:33.82 (Ranked #1) (by 1.63 seconds)

Her 1000 FR swim time:

- First season: 8:57.55 (Ranked #24)
- Pre-transition: 8:55.75 (Ranked #18)
- During transition: 9:46.67 (Ranked #302)
- Post-transition: 9:35.96 (Ranked #10)

Her 1650 FR swim time:

- First season: 14:59.19 (Ranked #48)
- Pre-transition: 14:54.76 (Ranked #32)
- During transition: DID NOT COMPETE (would have been #304 w/ post-transition time)
- Post-transition: 15:59.71 (Ranked #13)

As you can see, her rankings took a massive blow once starting her transition during the initial phase. She was required to continue participating in the men's division, causing her to drop from a top 35 swimmer in multiple categories to outside the top 300 in all those events. Once she met NCAA qualifications, her rankings started to rebound in correlation to individuals ahead of her graduating, a continuation of training, and the overall competitive nature the NCAA brings.

I could continue for hours regarding why I do not support HB 1489, but this would turn into reading a book. This is blatant discrimination against a minority population within the state of North Dakota, one that statistically has the lowest rate of trans people regarding all fifty states. We don't see this as an issue within our state, as trans people aren't "dominating," especially if they aren't participating. This isn't an issue within our state and will continue to waste our time and money.

I ask that you vote NO on HB 1489 for the reasons listed above, the reasons other individuals testifying provide, and the hundreds of additional reasons I could provide.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share this testimony.

-Mia Halvorson