

68th Legislative Session

Chairperson Larson and Committee

I am writing in opposition to HB #1249. I am a parent of a transgender person and I believe my voice should be heard.

Many of you, if not all of you, have no first-hand experience interacting with a transgender person or a parent of a transgender person. Your lack of knowledge and callousness toward the transgender community shows in this bill, and other bills proposed this session, that are designed to erase the transgender community from North Dakota.

Where knowledge and compassion should be used in making laws that impact the citizens of North Dakota; fear, rumors, false narratives along with social media and fake news channels from such as FOX News continues to spew hate and resonates with most of those in the GOP party.

In raising a transgender child in North Dakota, I have much more insight than a lot of people in North Dakota, other than other transgender parents and the medical professionals. I know first-hand the struggles that the transgender child faces every day.

First, let me say this loud and clear, **transgender kids are born this way. Transgender is not a choice, not a phase or fad.** Being transgender is absolutely not a way to gain an edge over girls in sports. That is one of many false statements that the group who choose to hate transgender people like to state. My child never played sports. My child never wanted to play sports. However, if my child wanted to play sports, why should she be kept out of the sport of her choice?

My child looks just like any other girl her age. Her body isn't that of a male, her mannerisms and characteristics are all of female her age. Why is that? Because we followed all the **BEST PRACTICES** that are already in place for helping transgender people transition. This means the blockers and estrogen were given at the beginning of puberty which means the muscle mass, body hair and other body characteristics of a male did not develop for my daughter. My daughters muscle mass is that of other girls who are not athletic or use strength training to excel in their sport.

Keeping transgender kids from playing sports with their peers is cruel and uncalled for. There is no reason to fear a transgender child playing any sports, using a locker room or bathroom with the same sex they identify with.

Transgender kids just want to belong and be a part of their school's activities. There have been no incidents in the State of North Dakota in which a transgender person has assaulted or accosted a Cisgender peer. There have been instances where the Cisgender peer has been the aggressor and has done criminal acts on school grounds. My daughter is one who has a Cisgender female take video of my daughter who was in a stall going to the bathroom. That Cisgender peer committed a crime in the State of North Dakota. I am so tired of hearing parents feel they need to protect their girls. I feel the same way. The fact is that Cisgender people are the ones to assault or commit a hate crime and not the other way around. My daughter uses the bathroom or locker room for the same reason other girls her age use those rooms. However, some of these Cisgender peers are aggressive and do lash out physically or like in my daughters case, use their phones in places which are not allowed. Why is that, well kids hear the

talk at home and they think it's ok to act out because of what they hear at home. Now, these same hostile, unruly kids are getting the same message from our law makers.

To judge a person whom you don't know or have any contact with because that person has a medical condition is not only cruel but it is simply the act of being a bully.

Transgender athletes **DO NOT dominate sports that they participate in.** That also is another false story spread by those whose agenda is to rage war against the transgender community. Transgender kids shouldn't be ostracized because of ignorance of adults who say they are acting in the best interest of girls. If that was true then where does 21<sup>st</sup> century medical science come into play vs. 1970's medical science which does not even factor in transgender people?

The medical science of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century shows that a transgender person is a girl. Her brain, under MRI imaging, is the same brain as her female peers. Doctors know this, parents know this, and the transgender person knows this, but the legislative body here clearly does not know this.

Keeping transgender kids from playing sports with their Cisgender peers is bigotry and unfair. The transgender person didn't ask to be born this way. The transgender person contributing to a team sport just like any other student in their school.

What are you teaching the Cisgender students in the schools by even drafting a bill like this? You are teaching students that they can discriminate against someone who is different from them. You are **NOT** teaching tolerance, acceptance and empathy. You're encouraging the Cisgender students to look at a transgender classmate as less than. Is that how you want our children in North Dakota to see others who don't look or act like themselves? Would you allow this to happen to children who have Downs Syndrome? Downs Syndrome is something a person is born with. Would you think it is ok for the Cisgender peers to bully and pick on the person with Downs Syndrome? There's no difference, the Downs Syndrome student is different than the Cisgender students. No that wouldn't be tolerated but it's **open season** on transgender students at school and here at the Capitol.

Schools are supposed to be a place where knowledge and tolerance is fostered. This bill allows schools to tell their transgender students they must ignore how they feel and see themselves. This bill neglects to see how this harms the self-esteem and mental health of the transgender student.

No one likes to be ignored let alone told to be something they aren't. Would you all want to go through life as the opposite gender just because I say so? How many of you would have a problem being called a name and pronouns used towards you that don't align with who you are? Would you willingly wear clothing and make yourself up as the opposite gender just to make me happy? No, you wouldn't do it. I asked legislators since this session started and I kept hearing that they wouldn't like to be called a name they didn't identify with or dress in a way that they didn't want to just to make me happy or comfortable. So then why impose this on our youth?

The suicide rate is so high in our schools and the suicide rate is twice as high for transgender kids' vs Cisgender kids. This fact is unacceptable and instead of making transgender kids feel accepted and welcomed in their schools these bills add to the stress and hopelessness of transgender youth in our schools.

Again, I ask you, where is the compassion and acceptance from those of you who say you are Christian?

This bill is anything but what Christ taught. Our Lord and Savior would not have gone out of His way to make the life of an innocent person worse.

This issue has been addressed two years ago with HB #1298. The agency regulating high school sports already has a guideline on transgender students who play sports in North Dakota.

In the two years since HB #1298, has any incidents that arose from a transgender athlete has dominated a high school sport? **No.**

I encourage you to meet a parent of a transgender person. I know that parents of transgender kids want to be heard and would gladly sit down and talk with any of you so they can enlighten you as to what their family has gone through and what this bill would do to their transgender child.

I ask you to vote Do Not Pass on HB #1249.

Kristie Miller Parent of Transgender