

Testimony of Mia (My-ah) Halvorson (She/her)

House Human Services Committee

In Opposition of HB 1298: Athletic events exclusively for males or exclusively for females.

January 25, 2021

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, adolescents, and marginalized communities – groups of people that certainly include transgender kids.

However, my understanding of what it means to be a young trans person is not merely academic. You see, I am transgender as well, and I would like to make it clear that being trans is not a choice. No individual would choose a life encumbered by discrimination and oppression - where our lives are under a microscope from society and the whims of elected officials. The repercussions if this bill passes would be an everlasting message – that all trans kids are second class North Dakotans despite just having the same goals as every other kid - succeeding as their true, authentic selves.

This harmful bill would also violate federal law since, as of January 20th, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden signed the Executive Order titled 'Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation.' The first two sentences within Section 1, Paragraph 1 of this Executive Order state:

"Every person should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear, no matter who they are or whom they love. Children should be able to learn without worrying about whether they will be denied access to the restroom, the locker room, or school sports."

The Executive Order can be reviewed in its entirety at the link provided: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-preventing-and-combating-discrimination-on-basis-of-gender-identity-or-sexual-orientation/>.

As a transgender individual, I have had the opportunity to watch as some states and countries have rewritten their laws to provide inclusion for the growing transgender community. I have also watched as other states and countries have passed damaging laws, degrading the same community. Please, do not make that mistake. Transgender individuals deserve an equal opportunity, just as every other person deserves.

Finally, the reasons that I have listed above are not the only reasons that I urge the opposition of HB 1298, but I trust that these reasons, along with the testimony of many others who have the best

interests of North Dakota kids in mind, are sufficient for you to make the right choice – voting no on HB 1298.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony.

-Mia Halvorson