

Greetings Chairman Weisz and Committee Members,

As a former North Dakota student-athlete, I was heartbroken to read about North Dakota House Bill 1298, which seeks to discriminate against youth in North Dakota who wish to participate in athletics.

My experiences as a cross country and track runner helped me build self-confidence, learn leadership skills, work as a team member, and make lifetime friendships. When it came time to apply for college, I had access to grants and scholarships due to being a high school athlete. I also had an opportunity to be mentored by a great coach who I still reach out to for life advice. (Thanks, Coach Tim!)

Athletics is so much more than drills, games, and sportsmanship. Every student with the interest and drive to participate in high school athletics should have the chance, regardless of gender identity. I encourage North Dakota state legislators to dismiss HB 1298 for what it is, discriminatory and punitive. Had I been born 20 years earlier, I would have missed out on the chance to participate in cross country. Luckily, the NDHSAA had progressed to open doors for more students to play, allowing girls to run cross country a year after I was born. We need to keep opening doors, not closing them. North Dakota can do better for our youth. I urge the committee to recommend Do Not Pass on HB 1298.

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