

My name is Rebecca Quimby and I am currently the Head Women's Soccer Coach of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. While Concordia is not located in North Dakota, we are still a strong part of the Fargo-Moorhead community. Since I have moved to the Fargo-Moorhead area I have coached youth soccer in North Dakota at the club level as well as recruited numerous North Dakota student-athletes to play soccer for Concordia College. Currently, of my team's 27 student-athletes, eight of them are North Dakota residents, and 11 have played soccer for their club or high school in North Dakota. We will add at least three more North Dakota student-athletes in 2021 who are already committed to play for Concordia.

I am writing to express my opposition to House Bill 1298. While I believe this bill is directed toward discriminating against transgender student-athletes I believe this bill also unintentionally prevents access to all female-athletes, whether they were born of that gender or not. Female-athletes that live in rural areas will be among those most affected. It is not uncommon for a female to compete on male athletic team if there is no female option available to them. While almost every high school may have a men's and women's basketball team, the same cannot be said for sports like soccer. Small rural areas often allow women to play for a men's team when no women's team is established. This would even further restrict the access that these women have and would create even larger obstacles for these student-athletes to overcome just to participate in athletics. Restricting that access will put restraints on the player pool in North Dakota, something that directly affects the success of my program. We are proud to have almost a third of our program from North Dakota but this statistic could change if talent and participation numbers in North Dakota were to decline.

I previously held positions as a division I assistant for both Youngstown State and Tennessee Tech. As permitted by the NCAA we often had male practice players train with our women's programs, which helped to develop our women's teams, and expand our practice rosters. These athletes, whose participation causes them to use a year of their NCAA eligibility, would no longer be permissible under your proposed legislation. While at Thomas More College I had the pleasure of coaching both the men's and women's team at the same time. We would often allow our men and women to interchangeably practice with the other team if they had to miss their regularly scheduled practice. This bill would have taken away from that freedom and commitment that we had to academics. Let's also not forget that a program such as NDSU would never be able to have their own Sarah Fuller to make history for the Bison as the Vanderbilt Football kicker did earlier this year.

I have devoted my life to women's athletics and have spent the past decade coaching at the Division I and III levels. While I have heard the concern that some may have for transgender participation in athletics, I can assure you that there is no real threat to athletics, specifically women's athletics. The NCAA has allowed transgender student-athletes to participate in college athletics since before I started coaching college sports without incident. Transgender student-athletes are not "stealing" scholarships, championships or opportunities from female student-athletes. I have never experienced any detriment to my program or women's athletics due to the NCAA's inclusive stance on transgender student-athletes. In my opinion, this bill is unnecessary and reckless. This bill would not make our athlete's safer because there is no impending risk.

I would like to add that this bill and others like it affect the overall perception of North Dakota and its relationship to minorities. Personally, this bill as well as other anti-LGBT legislation has encouraged me to live in Minnesota despite cheaper taxes, lower house prices and better commerce in

Fargo. I recently bought a house in Minnesota with my wife, Chelsea. I am sad to say that while we considered buying a home in North Dakota, ultimately we felt that our rights as an LGBT couple would be better protected in the state of Minnesota. As the success of my program and my community are tied to this bill I hope you will seriously consider both my personal and professional experience. Thank you for consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Quimby