

Testimony of Julie Rygg  
Visit Greater Grand Forks Executive Director  
House Bill 1298  
March 8, 2021

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Chairperson Larson and Senate Judiciary Committee:

Please accept this testimony, on behalf of Visit Greater Grand Forks (Visit GGF), as strong opposition to House Bill 1298, which we understand is now in your committee. We are requesting a “Do Not Pass” of the bill from the Judiciary Committee.

HB 1298 likely will prevent all youth sports activities from competing in public venues or receiving public funding (including support from destination marketing organizations such as Visit GGF). This is because most national sanctioning bodies for youth sports (USA Hockey, USA Volleyball, USA Swimming, etc.) have already approved inclusive participation policies with some restrictions.

For reference, I am also including some economic data, so you may be aware of the impact a bill such as this one may have on communities:

- In 2019 youth sports events, which received funding sponsorships from Visit Greater Grand Forks had a total of \$7,329,176 projected **direct spending impact**. This is a conservative estimate. Direct spending refers to actual dollars spent in a community such as lodging, meals, etc. This does not include the economic impact multiplier, which would make the projections much higher.
- Direct spend impact of some major Grand Forks sports events in 2019:
  - Jr. Grand Am Basketball - \$2,091,194
  - Greater Grand Forks Soccer Tournament - \$350,124
  - GF Youth Hockey Association tournaments (2019-2020 season) - \$7.3 million
- Additional impacts:
  - Many youth sports activities rely heavily on our financial and in-kind support, which could be lost if this bill passes.



- We may be in jeopardy of losing multi-year commitments such as FIRST LEGO Great Northern Regional Championship.
- Organizations such as Red River BMX are planning new facilities to attract more events, which could be in jeopardy.

While none of us at Visit Greater Grand Forks feel as though we are knowledgeable enough to make decisions related to if, when, where or how transgender athletes should be allowed to compete, which is why it is our stance these decisions should be left in the hands of the governing bodies. These organizations have been dealing with these issues for decades and have much more knowledge on how to be equitable.

Again, I ask you to send a “Do Not Pass” on HB 1298, as it could have devastating impact on the state’s travel and tourism industry. Thank you for your time and consideration.