

January 25th, 2021

Greetings Chairman Weisz and Committee Members,

My name is Madison Jansky, I am a licensed social worker in North Dakota, a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and a life-long resident of North Dakota.

Originally from Mandan, I currently live in Fargo with my fiancé Grace. In solidarity with the Transgender community of North Dakota, I am testifying in opposition to House Bill 1298, which would ban Transgender students from participating on sports teams that align with their gender identity.

ALL of our students deserve to gain confidence, self-discipline, and the chance to be part of a team. Not just that, House Bill 1298 goes beyond basketball courts, football fields, and hockey rinks. Students also deserve to feel reassured by decision-makers to pass policies that support and protect who they are, not threaten their lives and well-being.

At the end of 2019, the LGBTQ+ advocacy organization called The Trevor Project, released the results of their National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. Out of 34,000 youths who responded:

- Over 13,000 respondents seriously considered attempting suicide-7,160 of which were transgender or non-binary
- Over 24,000 of LGBTQ+ youth reported feeling sad or hopeless for at least two weeks
- 2 out of 3 LGBTQ youth reported that someone tried to force or coerce them to change their sexual orientation or gender identity, with youth who have undergone conversion therapy more than twice as likely to attempt suicide as those who did not.
- 25,840 respondents felt that the recent political climate impacted their mental health or sense of self.

This discriminatory bill cannot be separated from these statistics. And supporters of House Bill 1298 do not get to separate these statistics from the bill. Those sitting silent as our kids, teens, and young adults suffer, do not get to separate themselves from these statistics. Someone's personal beliefs rooted in fear, hate, and misinformation do not represent the best interest of North Dakotans and should not be used to propose legislation.

I have the lived experience of being a queer student and resident in the state of North Dakota. I ask you to stop this bill from becoming law in our state. I have the personal and professional experience to know that this bill will cause nothing but harm to our community.

The country is watching, and our community is watching.

I encourage the committee to vote DO NOT PASS on HB 1298.

-Madison Jansky, LBSW