

March 15, 2021

The Honorable Diane Larson, Chair

North Dakota Senate Judiciary Committee

Testimony before Chair Larson and Committee Members, March 16, 2021

I'm writing in opposition of House Bill 1298.

I am the proud parent of two children that participate in multiple youth sports in West Fargo, ND. My 10-year-old recently competed in the 10 & Under ND Short Course Championship Swim Meet. This weekend, my 13-year-old will participate in 11 & Over ND Short Course Championship Swim Meet at the Hulbert Aquatic Center in West Fargo. As members of the West Fargo Flyers swim club, their swim meets are governed by the USA Swimming policies. USA Swimming largely adopts the International Olympic Committees policies on transgender athletes; these policies are thoroughly researched and well thought out by experts at the international level. House Bill 1298 would effectively end USA Swimming competitions in the state of North Dakota for my athletes, as well as hundreds of other athletes, statewide.

The Hulbert Aquatic Center in West Fargo is one of the finest swimming facilities in the country. The facility and community brings in regional and national competitions, which attract swimmers from around the country. Those swimmers, their families, and their fans help bring hundreds of thousands of dollars for not only our swim club, but also our local economy. Passing House Bill 1298 would put a stop to the Hulbert Aquatic Center hosting those events, along with the businesses in our community that profit from those events taking place. Even with the proposed amendments to House Bill 1298, our swim club would not survive and our Olympic pool, which was once used by Michael Phelps, would sit empty.

The collateral damage of passing House Bill 1298 on youth sports in North Dakota would mean the loss of millions of dollars annually to the local economies around our state from not only USA swimming, but also USA hockey, USA wrestling, and any other national organization that would not follow the bill's rules. The bill is unnecessary. If passed, it will devastate our young athletes that just want to compete.

I played multiple sports at West Fargo High School and played volleyball at the University of North Dakota. I understand the notion of wanting females to compete against females, but this bill is unnecessary and if passed, would be devastating to athletes across North Dakota. As a proud female North Dakota athlete myself, wife, mother of North Dakota athletes, and maybe someday a grandmother of North Dakota athletes, I cannot sit back and let the North Dakota Legislature strip away opportunity from the youth athletes in our state. Please **VOTE NO** to the House Bill 1298.

Sincerely,

Kristi Engelstad