

I am providing testimony urging a DO NOT PASS recommendation on HB 1298 relating to participation in athletic events exclusively for males or females. If the legislators pass this bill it will affect the swim club, the West Fargo Flyers, which both of my daughters are active members. It would prevent the West Fargo Flyers from using almost all swimming facilities in the Fargo and West Fargo area with the current wording of the bill. This would mean our club would struggle to find facilities to host its swim practices and meets. This would lead to an increase cost because of the likely competition between clubs for practice times and meets. The inability to use facilities could lead to our club ending its existence as the difficulty and cost in finding facilities outweighs any potential benefits from keeping the club.

The current wording of the bill would also result in the loss of millions of dollars to the local community. This bill not only affects our swim club but other youth sports such as Fargo Youth Hockey Association. Like USA Swimming, USA Hockey has a policy of inclusivity which would pre-empt them and other youth hockey organizations from renting ice from public venues if the bill passes. It would also lead to the loss of other youth sports events and tournaments as these entities all ready have policies in place related to inclusivity or do not want to face a public backlash of not supporting inclusivity. The economic loss to the West Fargo-Fargo, region, and our state does not make sense.

Even with proposed amendments there are still issues. Events would not want to have meets hosted in our state for fear of suffering a backlash. Simply look to what happened to North Carolina after they passed its state's bathroom bill. The NCAA prevented North Carolina from hosting any championships because of that bill. It is estimated North Carolina lost 3.56 Billion dollars because of the bill. There is also likely to be litigation surrounding this bill which will only cost North Dakota additional money in defending such a bill.

In addition, this bill is not necessary. All the governing bodies in youth sports have already considered these issues and have policies in place. Moreover, there has not been any issue with transgendered athletes in North Dakota. This is a bill looking for a problem rather than trying to solve a problem.

Lastly, this last year has been especially hard on kids. The one outlet my two daughters had this year was their swim team. When they could not see relatives, go out to eat, or to movies, swimming was their fun. This bill is likely to take that away from them. A DO NOT PASS recommendation is the only solution.