

House Bill (HB) 1298 creates the potential to financially damage the State of North Dakota's hospitality industry. Implementing HB 1298 could disqualify the state's publicly-owned or managed venues (such as The FARGODOME or Alerus Center) from hosting regional and national athletic events. For example, USA Wrestling (which often hosts large regional tournaments) has a policy allowing individuals who have transitioned from female to male or from male to female (with conditions) to compete in their corresponding category. With the restrictions created by HB 1298, events hosted by the USA Wrestling organization with similar policies may not be hosted in those publicly-owned or managed venues.

Numerous other organizations are following the policies of a governing body which conflicts with the language of HB 1298, including but not limited to: USA Swimming, USA Hockey and USA Gymnastics. As this bill is written, individual sports programs would not be able to follow both the governing bodies' policies and North Dakota Law, making it impossible for events sanctioned by these organizations to be hosted in North Dakota.

The ramifications of losing such events would not only impact the venues, but also the hotels, restaurants and retailers who benefit tremendously from these large, multi-day events. A spending measurement study by the Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau conservatively estimates each individual visiting Fargo for a sporting event spends \$225 per day. The potential of losing events with hundreds of participants (as well as spectators) could hurt restaurants, shops and hotels which are already feeling the effects of a down year due to COVID-19.

There is precedent for events being pulled from states with legislation regarding transgender people. For example, at the collegiate level, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rescinded seven athletic events which were meant to be hosted in North Carolina in 2016 and 2017. These rescissions were due to a North Carolina law regarding transgender individuals' usage of public bathrooms.

A state law passed in Idaho banning transgender women from playing on women's sports teams prompted the NCAA to state the law "conflicts with the NCAA's core values of inclusivity, respect and the equitable treatment of all individuals." Idaho ultimately ended up losing its rights to host two NCAA March Madness games as the tournament is slated to be hosted in one central geographic location. It is important to note, however, that the NCAA Board of Governors is currently reviewing its policies on transgender athletes and event venues.

Allow the NCAA, the North Dakota High School Athletic Association and other entities to create their own applicable policies. The touch of government does not belong in this issue.

I would urge the North Dakota Senate to consider the potential ramifications of the passage of HB 1298, including the financial impact it could have on some of the industries hit hardest by COVID-19 and the long-term wellbeing of the state's economy.

