

Hello Chairman Larson and Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

My name is Kristie Miller and I was born and raised in ND. I am here today to speak in opposition to House Bill 1298 and I am here today as a ND parent of a transgender teenager. I want to share with you my personal experience in raising a transgender teen in our great state. I want you to know the struggles these kids face today here in North Dakota.

In the spring of 2014, my child came out to me as transgender. My first reaction was one of confusion, anger and then fear. I had no idea what transgender meant or what transgender was. My thinking was something had to be wrong with my child and I needed to fix this immediately. This was the beginning of not only my daughter's transformation but of mine as well. This was the beginning of my learning that things in life are not black and white as well as learning that my understanding of the human body was about to be expanded.

After a year of counseling, we sat down with the counselor and was told frankly that our child was not acting out but was indeed transgender. We were also told that it was time to reach out to a medical doctor to proceed with our journey into transitioning since our child was just beginning puberty. I had to take my child Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN because I could not find a doctor who would do the extensive testing and evaluating in North Dakota. The closest clinical setting that specializes in transgender health at that time were University of MN and Mayo Clinic

Mayo Clinic had just developed a new clinic that specializes in transgender health. My child underwent a day full of medical tests and time with a psychologist, a team of doctors and nurse practitioner. I asked the Team how did my child become transgender. It was explained to me in very easy terms. In utero the fetus body forms first. After a period of time the brain forms. For some reason still not quite understood, a surge of hormones interferes with the fetus during brain formation and this surge of hormones alters the brains formation process; making the brain change its gender formation from one gender to the other. Meaning the body is formed one gender while the brain is another. Female and males' brains are different when looked at by using an MRI. The two brains are physically different. Nothing I did or didn't do caused this. This is NOT a choice. My child's body and brain are not in synch with each other. It is not medically allowed to have anyone under 18 to undergo gender reassignment surgery. Until the age of 18 these kids are stuck with a body that is not in agreement with who they are as well as having to patiently wait until the age of 18. The age of 18 is when medical procedures for gender reassignment surgery can begin to be addressed.

My child has gone through school being bullied and victimized by a peer using a camera to take video of my child in bathroom stall in school. My child was outed by a teacher in class as well as disrespected by teachers in her classroom by purposefully using the wrong pronouns in class even though these teachers were told NOT to make this mistake again. And yet, my child continued to be humiliated and

traumatized by the teachers. My child was stressed and fearful each academic day, not knowing if she would be subjected to more discriminatory actions towards her while at school. You are probably thinking “why didn’t you move or leave ND? The answer is, ND is our home.

Transgender kids experience ridicule and hatred by peers, faculty, staff and people in their own communities. Suicide rates for transgender youth are twice as high as their peers. School is supposed to be a place that is safe. School should be a place where team building and problem skills develop due to the exposure and interaction with other students that have different interests, life experiences, and backgrounds. Transgender kids just want to be kids, and some transgender kids want to play sports and

HB 1298 is unnecessary and unwarranted. HB 1298 defies modern-day science. HB 1298 defies medical experts, mental health clinicians, sports associations & school administrators in North Dakota; all of whom say this policy that is proposed is harmful and again unnecessary. The North Dakota High School Activities Association already has a vetted policy in place that was created by coaches and officials who best understand their students and respective sports. My child and others like my child are in no way to be blamed for being transgender. Our children have the courage to be who they are despite living in communities where some people believe these children just want to cheat at sports. That is preposterous, and it is also plain wrong.

To be honest any one of you in the Senate could easily be where I am standing today. One of you might have a child who is transgender, the child just hasn’t come out to you yet or future grandchild born transgender. How would this bill effect your loved one? Would you ok telling your transgender child no, you can’t play sports because others don’t understand?

In closing, I urge the committee for a Do Not Pass recommendation on HB 1298 and I will stand for any questions.

Kristie Miller
ND

Hello to Chairman Larson and Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

I am very upset with House Bill 1298. I have just as much right as the other girls. I am a girl. I am legally a female, there is no reason why I cannot use the girl's locker room and bathrooms. How do you think this bill would make me feel?

Excluding me from using the girl's locker room would do some definite damage to my mental health. I already am insecure enough. You would rather force a trans person be uncomfortable and insecure as long as you are comfortable and secure. The rights of us transgender students are being ignored. We transgender students have every right to participate in any sport that we are interested in just like any other student. House Bill 1298 only takes away the opportunities for transgender students, who want to express themselves and to feel good about themselves.

The very idea that female transgender students who want to compete in a sport just to have an edge and excel is so wrong. That statement is fear based and totally dismissed the drive and ambition of a student who is an athlete but also happens to be transgender.

HB 1298 discriminates against transgender students who want to compete with their peers in team sports. When will society learn from the past. Shouldn't we learn from past issues that people deemed wrong such as same sex marriages or inter-racial marriages. Today, these issues are no longer a big deal. There was nothing to fear from these issues and other issues when inclusion or exclusion was the topic of debate. How can you all sit and judge a group of people that none of you know anything about. You don't know me. You don't seem to want to know me or care how we feel. This bill doesn't protect anyone but it does put people at risk of being assaulted. This bill puts people at an increased risk of being bullied and this bill segregates me and others like me from the other kids in school. How can that be right?

I can't help that my brain and body do not match like yours does. I can't surgically change my body until I'm 18. But I look like any other girl, and of course I have the mind of a girl as well. I would only hope to be treated as such, it should be a basic human right for me and others in my situation. It's bad enough that I struggle like any other kid but to have the state I live in mandate the team sport in which I can play in is just unbelievable. School is where we are to learn to work with others and about our differences. Our differences should be accepted and not feared. I thought once a person learns about something that is different than the fear that person once had fads away? How can this fear go away if the state excludes transgender students from sports? How will that state see that there is nothing to fear if you suppress transgender athletes?

Transgender students have a lot to fear and now we are to add the State of North Dakota to the list of bullies? This bill is sending the message that transgender students are less than equal to their peers and should be treated as such. Would you be ok with this bill if your son or daughter were transgender?

Would you vote for this bill if your grandchild was transgender and wanted to play sports? Think of who this bill hurts. These are people who you don't know. The one thing you do know about them is they want to play sports.

Sincerely,

An Anonymous Teen
Resident of North Dakota