

Written Testimony In Opposition to HB1298

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Chairperson Larson and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing you today in opposition to HB1298. I am doing this as a concerned parent, a member of my community, and a professional in the hospitality industry. Today I am going to talk about some of the issues with this bill. This is not all encompassing, and I am sure you will hear many in our state that agree with me and of course a few that disagree.

1. HB1298 is NOT a women's right issue as Senator Myrdal would like you to believe. Women have long been playing on co-ed teams. When I was in grade school in Steele-Dawson public school in the late 1980's the boys team was short a player for a trip to Medina for a tournament. Who got the call up? Me. A female. A female that played on the boys team. I can't remember if we won or lost that day. What I do remember is that I was a kid. A kid that loved basketball and would have played on any team that allowed me to do so....regardless of gender. When Sen. Myrdal talks about women's right and Title IX she is twisting the meaning. Title IX is simply a federal law that protects people from sex-based discrimination in school programs and activities that receive federal money. Sex-based discrimination. If I identify as a female then they can't discriminate against me for playing on a women's team. And vice versa if I identify as a male. I also find it difficult that Sen. Myrdal is all of a sudden a women's right proponent.
2. NDHSAA has already written a policy that is working. Why are we fixing what isn't broken? I would think that our governing body of high school activities knows what is best for their people. In our ND Legislature it is always talked about how we want to keep our decisions local. Allowing NDHSAA to make this policy is about as local as it gets.
3. Economic Impact on our communities and states. I work as a Director of Sales for the Marriott hotels in Bismarck and have recently taken on hotels in Fargo and Grand Forks. I know how impactful USA sanctioned sporting events are on our bottom lines. If these communities were to lose these events it would be detrimental to our industry, food service, shopping and so much more. If this bill passes all USA sanctioned sporting events would end in our state due to their existing policies. We currently have rooms sold to teams for the 2021 USA Wrestling event held in Fargo. If that event cancels my three hotels alone would lose around \$20,000 in sleeping room revenue over the two days. That doesn't take into account all the other industries and monies they will be spending. The potential revenue loss after coming off of COVID would be devastating to our local economies and our hotels. We simply can't afford to lose anymore than we already have.
4. This is the most important piece of this legislation. The kids. These kids are just trying to stay alive and fit in. We teach our kids to be inclusive. To be kind. To not bully. And then we try to pass legislation that says you are not worthy. You are not normal. You are not good enough. As adults we are the ones with the issue. Most kids don't care. They just want to play a sport and been seen as a human. We as adults need to take a hard look at ourselves and decide what world we want to leave for our kids and grandkids. The future is changing. We need to support and honor that.

I am requesting a Do Not Pass from this committee on HB1298. Thank you for your time.