

My name is Phyllis Johnson. I live in Grand Forks.

I strongly oppose HB 1298, which would effectively ban transgender youth from participating in sports teams that align with their gender identity.

My oldest grandchild is transgender, and I have two friends who have transgender children. I love my granddaughter with all my heart, and I know that my friends love their children as all parents do. Sports are an important part of school for many youth, and sports play a significant role in social development for many young people. Transgender youth do not pose any risk to schoolmates, other youth, or adults. They simply want to participate in school and society like anyone else. They should not be prohibited from participating on sports teams. A prohibition such as this bill would create would be a negative for the mental health of many transgender youth.

As a Christian, I believe we are called to love one another and not to judge others. Fearmongering and bullying are not what Christ calls us to do.

My granddaughter is extremely reluctant to visit me and my husband in Grand Forks because of bias against transgender people such as that evident in HB 1298. Simply put, she is afraid for her safety in North Dakota.

If we want young people to live and work in North Dakota, we cannot enshrine bias in state law. Many of our own youth will leave, many as soon as they can after high school. We will attract fewer students to our fine universities and fewer applicants for our job opportunities.

Please give this bill a Do Not Pass recommendation.