

Dear Chair Larson and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I urge you to vote DO NOT PASS on HB 1298, which would prohibit young athletes from participating in sports activities, solely on the basis of their sex and gender identity.

In the United States, discrimination on the basis of sex is expressly prohibited and has repeatedly been upheld by the Supreme Court of the land. People who are male must be allowed to take home economics, for instance; people who are female must be allowed to run for student government; and people who are transgender, those whose identities complicate the simplistic categories of male and female, must also be allowed to participate in the full range of school activities, including school sports.

As an ordained minister, and also as the chosen mother of a beautiful transgender human being, I have been truly blessed by the presence of gender nonconforming people in my life. From many transgender people, I have learned that God's creation is both more vast and more intricate than I had ever imagined. Just as there are many colors in the rainbow and trees in the forest, there are many ways of expressing human identity and potential. Many of the transgender people whom I am privileged to call my loved ones come from Indigenous cultures that have, for centuries, reserved a special and sacred role for those who are Two Spirit. Perhaps we North Dakotans of diverse backgrounds could learn from the original peoples of this place and offer transgender people full respect and participation in our communities – rather than arbitrary exclusion from activities such as sports, which should be open to girls, boys, and transgender students alike.

I urge your DO NOT PASS vote on HB 1298. Thank you so much for taking the time to hear from the people of North Dakota. Let's let transgender students on the team.

Sincerely,

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