

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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HEATHER MEYER
29TH DISTRICT

Opposition Testimony
House Committee on Education
House Bill 2238
February 13, 2023

Chairman Thomas, Vice-Chair Estes, Ranking Member Stogsdill, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 2238.

As a social worker who has primarily served the LGBTQ community, the first openly bisexual Kansas Legislator, and the mother of a non-binary/gender fluid transgender child, I am coming to you to request that you do not pass this bill out of committee favorably.

HB 2238 proposes that we set up a system which is not only discriminatory, but also invasive, and violates the privacy of our children and our families. I'm especially concerned as the mother of a transgender child and am left wondering how you will determine who is "female" enough to play a sport? Will our coaches, teachers, and school districts be required to single people out based on how they look or present themselves? What type of physical exam will our children be given, and who will give these exams? Are you going to require that every child who plays a sport, be given a chromosome test in the science lab before a game?

Furthermore, **HB 2238 will put the mental health and physical wellbeing of transgender youth in Kansas at risk.** Over the years, we've heard much testimony on how **transgender youth suffer from much higher rates of suicide, depression, bullying, and violence.** And we should not ignore that. This bill will only further exacerbate the problem by blatantly showing our kids that we as a State, as an elected body, do not feel that they are valid or worthy. Even worse is that **recent studies show that when bills like this are introduced, transgender kids are more likely to commit acts of self-harm, experience suicidal ideations, and even complete suicide.**

Even in the face of that reality, we're here once again to debate whether transgender kids deserve to grow up and have the same opportunities as their peers. Yet these are just kids who want to play sports. Kids who may be different than other kids, but kids all the same. And unlike soccer, basketball, baseball, or football, their lives are not some game that legislators can play. Their mental health isn't a ball you can toss around until you win. Because if this bill passes out of committee, there will be no winners, only state sponsored suffering.

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Our children deserve more than this. As a social worker, I want my clients to feel safe and included. As someone who was sent here to represent the voice of the people, I will continue to fight so that our kids and their families have a chance to be heard.

But as a mother, I am tired of repeating myself: Don't do this to our kids.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 2238.

Sincerely,

Representative Heather Meyer
District 29, Overland Park