

Opponent Testimony of HB2238

House Committee on Education

Monday, February 13, 2023

1:30pm, Room 218-N

Chair Rep. Adam Thomas

Vice Chair Rep. Susan Estes

HB 2238

Short Title: Creating the fairness in women's sports act to require that female student athletic teams only include members who are biologically female.

IN OPPOSITION

My name is Holly Terrill. I oppose HB 2238 because it is designed to criminalize students who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. As the parent of a school-aged transgender child, I strive to ensure that my son can experience everything that a child who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth gets to experience. This includes the ability to participate in sports at school.

My son has struggled with receiving respect and acknowledgement of his gender identity [as he interprets it] from school administration, educators, and students alike. I've observed him time and again correct a person who incorrectly (and often intentionally) misgender him and I've witnessed him calmly and respectfully explain to bullies that the characteristics which makes him different don't make less deserving of human dignity.

HB 2238 focuses on excluding including individuals whose gender identities are different from the gender they were assigned at birth based on their sex organs, but it does mention the word "fairness". There is nothing fair about making laws specially designed to discriminate against an entire group of individuals. There is so much more to a person's gender identity than simply a binary physical differentiation of gender as divided between "male" and "female". Being accepted for the identity in which a person individually identifies is important for the emotional wellbeing of a person, regardless of whether they identify as the gender they were assigned at birth or not.

Choosing to focus on the sex organs a person had at birth to determine whether they can run in a cross-country match or play a game of tennis with other kids who may look a little different than them is discriminatory. No child would choose to make their life harder by deciding to identify as a different gender than the one for which they appear so that they could have a better chance to win at a K-12 sport.

It has been my experience that people do not go in search of ways in which to be bullied by others; this bill creates the perfect opportunity for transgender children to be singled out and punished for wanting to participate and to belong. For the sake of my child and others like him, please do not pass this bill.

Respectfully,
Holly Terrill