

**February 13, 2023; 1:30 pm**  
House Committee on Education  
Rep. Adam Thomas, Chair

Melissa Stiehler  
Resicent of Topeka

**HB2238** – Creating the "fairness in women's sports" act to require that female student athletic teams only include members who are biologically female.

**Opponent, Written Only**

Chair Thomas and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Opponent testimony on HB2238.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience and perspective with you all. I am a bisexual woman, born and raised in the Kansas City metro. I was the one of very few girls at my high school who was openly LGBTQ. While there has been a tremendous amount of conversation around bullying amongst students, there has been little conversation about the ways that anti-LGBTQ bullying is encouraged by adults.

I was part of the graduating class of 2007. If you don't remember the politics around the LGBTQ community in the 2000s, let me paint you a picture. This is during the debate of the Defense of Marriage Act and the policy of Don't Ask Don't Tell. Most of my neighbors had signs in their yards referencing these policies. The signs read "man + woman = marriage". This slogan was created by adults, targeting adult members of the LGBTQ community, but was often used to harass me. My peers would use it when the other girls assaulted me in the restroom, because they said they were afraid of sharing the restroom with a lesbian. They would use it to bully me out of the locker room, because they said they didn't want to change in front of me. Then, they would use it to tease me when I was being sent to the principal's office for not changing into my gym clothes, which we were all required to do. I was miserable. I felt so alone. I complained to the adults about the bullying but they said there was nothing they could do. I started skipping school so I didn't have to be tormented by my peers until eventually I was expelled for missing too many classes.

I'm sure this story sounds familiar, because those same attacks against me used over a decade ago have been renewed against trans women and girls today. What happened to me was bad, but what this bill does today is far worse. When elected officials were debating my humanity through laws and policy in the 2000s, at least they were attacking grown adults and it was their children echoing them to attack me. Today, you are debating a bill directly attacking trans children. A piece of law that doesn't just legalize or encourage hate, but mandates it by banning

these children from playing sports with their friends. This is hateful legislation. I pray that you all don't have that kind of hate in your heart to pass this terrible bill, but every year a bill attacking children who may be different than your own gets a hearing. Those children are still human, so I strongly urge you to vote in opposition now and every time legislation like this comes up. Thank you for your time and consideration.