

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

Brenna Visocsky
Social Worker

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.

My name is Brenna Visocsky, and I am a social worker with experience providing mental health supports to transgender and nonbinary youth. I am submitting this oppositional testimony today because it is imperative we recognize the detrimental impacts of legislation like HB 2238. Building connections and learning skills like cooperation, teamwork, and problem-solving are important steps for all Kansans youth, including those who are transgender and nonbinary. Equally as important is gender-affirmation, the social recognition of and support for a person's gender identity and expression.

Transgender and nonbinary youth experience elevated rates of discrimination, as well as increased risk for thoughts of suicide and suicide attempts; however, a 2021 peer-reviewed study published in Transgender Health, found that transgender and nonbinary youth who received acceptance from adults and peers had significantly lower odds of attempting suicide. Inclusion and acceptance of transgender and nonbinary youth doesn't just benefit them, states that have transgender-inclusive sports policies demonstrate consistent or increased participation of girls in sports, unlike states that exclude transgender youth. Alternatively, states with policies that excluded transgender youth from sports or limited participation based on their sex assigned at birth showed decreased engagement by girls in sports.

It is imperative that young Kansans are able to play sports in a way that is inclusive and support of transgender and nonbinary youth; the benefits are clear. Similarly apparent are consequences that come from policies like HB 2238.

Thank you all for your time and consideration.