

March 2, 2023

Senate Committee on Education

NAME: Erica Benson

TITLE: Parent of students in Shawnee Mission School District, PTA Board Member, and Blue Valley School District teacher, Women's Equality Coalition of Greater KC member

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BILL NUMBER: HB 2238, Creating the fairness in women's sports act to require that female student athletic teams only include members who are biologically female.

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written

Dear Distinguished Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bill HB 2238. As a teacher, parent of two girls, and former high school athlete, I fundamentally stand by trans students and their right to participate in sports. All children have the right to play and learn and grow with their peers. Playing sports teaches life lessons like discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, accountability, and teamwork. From a social standpoint, sports are a powerful tool that brings people together and creates a sense of community. **IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT WINNING!** Discrimination against trans athletes is a violation of their Title IX rights and would be fought in an expensive lawsuit. Girls/women don't need your help or protection to get a better ribbon color, or a plastic trophy, or a win/loss record that will be forgotten. Boys/men are dangerous to girls/women, not trans athletes. **This bill does not protect women from any real problem. Where are the bills protecting girls from sexual violence and harrassment in schools? Where is the clear evidence that this is needed in Kansas? This bill terrorizes and stigmatizes people instead.**

As transgender people are now increasingly targets of discriminatory legislation, I think you should consider these three points made by **Thomas Jefferson**:

1. "LIBERTY . . . IS UNOBSTRUCTED ACTION ACCORDING TO OUR WILL: BUT RIGHTFUL LIBERTY IS UNOBSTRUCTED ACTION ACCORDING TO OUR WILL, WITHIN THE LIMITS DRAWN AROUND US BY THE EQUAL RIGHTS OF OTHERS. I DO NOT ADD 'WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAW'; BECAUSE LAW IS OFTEN BUT THE TYRANT'S WILL, AND ALWAYS SO WHEN IT VIOLATES THE RIGHT OF AN INDIVIDUAL." - THOMAS JEFFERSON
2. "The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only object of good government." - Thomas Jefferson
3. "*Whereas it appeareth that however certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercise of their natural rights, and are at the same time themselves better guarded against degeneracy, yet experience hath shewn, that even under the best forms, those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny . . .*" - Thomas Jefferson

I do not think this is a matter you have the knowledge or authority to legislate on and it is tyrannical and cruel. Please oppose **HB Bill 2238**, thank you for your consideration.

Erica Benson, Overland Park, KS