

Susan Gerth  
Private Citizen, House District 67  
Opponent Testimony of HB 2238  
For the Senate Committee on Education

March 6, 2023

Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I am writing in opposition to HB 2238, which discriminates against transgender children and youth. This bill is problematic for a variety of reasons, many of which can be detrimental to the mental and emotional health of children and youth. The bill is also an attempt to solve a problem which does not exist.

As the mother of an adult transgender woman, I am aware of the myriad challenges faced by transgender persons, many of which are created by a society that refuses to see their humanity. I ask you to see trans girls and trans women simply as girls and women. Please understand that they have the same variations in skills and abilities as cis girls and cis women. They deserve the same opportunities to grow and compete in sports as anyone else does.

This topic is important in Kansas, because participation in sports is a wonderful opportunity for many children and youth to learn important lessons in teamwork and sportsmanship. This bill denies that critical opportunity to a particular group of children just because they are different or do not fit into someone's definition of gender. The bill proliferates bullying and exclusion of children, which can be devastating. When athletes are very young, they simply want to learn and to play with their friends. To deny them that is cruel and can have long-lasting effects. When the athletes are older and have dedicated considerable time to their sport, denying them the opportunity is punitive and grossly unfair.

Additionally, the bill is based on faulty information implying that trans girls and trans women generally have a distinct physical advantage when competing against cis girls and cis women. Medical evidence shows that this is simply not true. Trans athletes have been competing with cis athletes for many years without dominating their sports. In any group of athletes, there will always be a wide range of skills and abilities not attributed to gender. The playing field is simply not level. Additionally, in many instances, success in sports can be dependent upon such factors as financial ability to access better coaching and competition available through traveling or select teams. These factors have a much greater effect on an athlete's development and competitive advantage than the gender which they were assigned at birth.

Please oppose this bill which seeks to ostracize marginalized children from participating in healthy activities with their friends and peers.

Sincerely,

Susan Gerth

Manhattan, KS