

Opponent Testimony of HB2238
For the Senate Education Committee
March 6, 2023
Jeanne Koontz
Kansas Resident / Clergy

Chair Baumgardner and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent written testimony on House Bill 2238.

I am a Kansas Resident, member of the clergy, and parent of public school students. As a clergyperson and person of faith, I believe it is important for all children to grow, learn, and live in a community where they receive the care and support they need to thrive; an environment free from prejudice, bullying, and discrimination. I am writing to you today to implore you to Vote No on HB 2238. This bill singles out one group of children and bans them from playing sports with their friends simply because they are different.

Trans children and youth deserve all the same opportunities in life as their cis gender peers, and for years they have been participating in sports at all levels. This bill would create divisions and opportunities for bullying based on gender identity differences. My children participate in sports at our local YMCA including a recreational dodgeball league. Many times these sports are co-ed which has not caused any issues. Children and youth regardless of gender develop at different rates. Allowing trans girls to compete in girls' sports does not hurt anyone -- but banning trans girls from girls' sports not only hurts trans girls but leads to decreased participation in girls' sports. A trans sports ban doesn't just affect athletes, either. LGBTQ youth are more than four times as likely as their straight, cisgender peers to attempt suicide.

Instead of spending our time and energy attacking trans people, let's work towards creating a mental health system that helps all people, and work towards preventing suicide in our children and youth.

Please vote No on HB 2238 and thank your for considering my testimony.