

Good morning to the members of the Committee and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Kevin Ritter. I am currently a Washington County Commissioner.

More importantly, I am a former college athlete and college coach, and for twenty years I was the President of a youth sports organization which, among other things, put together women's softball teams to represent the United States in tournaments around the world. Finally, I am the proud father of a high school volleyball player.

I am here today to ask you to consider supporting Representative Powell's legislation.

You will likely hear from others about the physiological differences between female and male athletes, even those who have chosen to take hormone-blocking drugs. They will talk with you about things like skeletal structure, muscle mass, and lung capacity.....all things upon which I am not qualified to speak.

You may also hear a religious argument.....that the legislature of a state whose motto reads, "*With God all things are possible,*" should refrain from validating a challenge to God's creation by allowing biological males to compete athletically against biological females.

Finally, you may hear an argument based upon safety.....that allowing biological males to compete with and against biological females puts the safety of those young women at undue risk. For my own part, I believe each of these arguments is reason enough to pass this legislation.

Nevertheless, I am NOT here to make any of those particular arguments today. Instead I am going to briefly share with you my observations regarding what happened to the softball players I

coached when biological males enter the competitive space reserved for women.

Here's what I mean.....and I observed this countless times as a college softball coach. The demeanor and confidence level of many of the young women I coached palpably changed when members of the men's baseball team entered the gymnasium at the end of our practice time.

What I observed in the very skilled, confident young women I was used to working with - some of them All-League performers - was a change in bearing that indicated a subornment to those who, by virtue of their very nature, could throw the ball harder, hit it farther, and run faster. In an instant, the introduction of biological males into that same competitive space changed the way the young women viewed themselves.

If the same thing happened on the field, the moment bigger, stronger, and faster male athletes arrived, I'd notice some of the young women began rushing through their reps in order to finish practice. The introduction of biological males into the same competitive space changed things.

Interestingly, the same change did not take place when members of the baseball team came out to watch our games. Why? Because these young men were in the stands, separated from the field. The men were spectators, NOT fellow athletes. They did not occupy the same space psychologically. The women were free to compete aggressively and confidently on a level playing field among themselves.

If the only thing girls can expect from sports is repeated failure at the hands of biologically advantaged trans-athletes, they will quickly lose interest and they will stop competing. They will quickly understand that they are unfairly disadvantaged when it

comes to recruiting and college scholarships. Sports will no longer be the positive influence it has been on the lives of scores of young women.

In fact, I'd be willing to say with a certain level of confidence that the introduction of trans-athletes into women's sports will mean the end of meaningful women's sports and I hate to think what that would mean for generations of young women.

Let me conclude with this.....Now is NOT the time for political calculation. This bill has languished in committee while other states have passed similar legislation. There is simply no good reason Ohio has failed to act.

There are some who believe today's hearing is simply a stunt designed to take the pressure off the faint-hearted, and that this bill will go right back into committee where it will die quietly.

I urge you not to let that happen.....for the young female athletes who deserve it, and for their parents who want it. And if not for them, then for your own political future because it's going to be hard to explain how you failed to protect young women if you do not pass this bill.

Fall sports begin in just a few weeks and thousands of young women across the state are asking you to ensure a level playing field so they can continue to pursue their dreams. The voters are waiting for your answer.

Thank you for having me.