

House Bill 61: Save Woman's Sports Act **Personal Testimony by Kathryn Byers**

Good morning, and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Kathryn Byers and I am a wife and mother of three school aged children in Northeast Ohio. I am here today to share with you the importance of the Save Woman's Sports Act cosponsored by Representative Powell and Representative Stoltzfus. House Bill 61 is an opportunity for Ohio to promise both its young and mature female athletes that we believe in equality in sports without disenfranchising one group for the sake of another. It is now more vital than ever in today's climate that we should be empowering young females while building their confidence and creating opportunity for them to thrive both on the playing field as well as in non-athletic life experiences.

As previously stated, I am a mother of three. My oldest child is my daughter, Addison. She is turning 10 years old this September and going into the 5th grade. Addison is a vibrant, healthy young lady and one of the greatest blessings God has granted me. She has developed a love for the game of soccer and has played consistently since she was 3 years old. She began on recreational teams and worked her way up to travel leagues in the Greater Akron Amateur Soccer Association (GAASA) with the hopes to continue to play into high school. She is learning skill, discipline, body control and so much more. Over the years Addison's confidence has blossomed giving her the credence and determination to becoming successful in sports. I have always told Addison that her opportunities are endless and that through dedication and fair play she could not only participate on the girl's high school soccer team, but that she could even be one of their strongest contributors.

Now with facing the current invitation of transgender students infiltrating athletic competition of the opposite biological gender, we are restricting opportunity for females and hindering their prospects of attaining peak achievements. This is attributed to physiological differences creating an inequitable advantage and unfair play. This is displayed in our divergent cardiovascular fitness, hormone levels, lung capacity, muscle mass, strength and endurance. I could go on and on providing citations of how male athletes have advantageous physical qualities that surpass the average female. Cardiovascular, muscle mass, oxygen capacity, mechanical advantages from bone and ligament structure to name a few. I could go on to include statistics and interviews with data from physicians and personal experiences from athletes. Instead, I will trust that you have read through this proposed legislation and can clearly see the distinguishing difference that can quite easily eliminate records and championships for young woman in sports. I urge for you to support the Save Woman's Sports Act which provides Ohio's female athletes the opportunity to fairly reach and set goals and records as well as justly solidify a scholarship, grant or athletic recognition.

Moving on, the participation of transgender and transsexual people in competitive sports not only diminishes fair play, but also invites a breach of privacy and creates confusion and anxieties among athletes in locker rooms, showers and bathrooms. The idea of having separate locker rooms for athletes was instituted long ago and for valid purpose. A 2016 article titled "What Really Happens When A Transgender Person Uses Locker Room" in the Seattle Times by Samuel Green states:

“For these reasons and more, our society has long recognized that biological realities demand that males and females not be forced together when bathing, changing clothes, using the restroom, or engaging in other activities where privacy is compromised. This common-sense belief in modesty and privacy—not animosity toward any demographic—impels our society's insistence on separate locker rooms and restrooms for the two sexes.

Ultimately, when it comes to undressing in front of others, it shouldn't matter whether a person verbally identifies as male or female. Such verbal statements don't change biological facts. But state bureaucrats have turned a blind eye to rubber-meets-the-road realities and entered the land of make believe.”

As a mother, I cannot support the concept of my daughter sharing these private, personal spaces with a male. Likewise, I would not embrace the reverse concept for my sons having a female present in their locker rooms, showers and/or bathrooms. Our country is losing its way and we are living in a time of reversal of traditional norms, values and practices. Our culture is being erased and our athletes, specifically young female participants are being cancelled, silenced and disenfranchised more and more every day. With every step away from our country's virtues

we are erasing opportunities for scholarships, records set, recognition and even privacy for female athletes throughout the country.

What about my rights as a mother to not be afraid for my daughter's safety, privacy and innocence? This does not line up with our family's values religious beliefs and it is definitely not the government's right to parent my children and decide what and when it is acceptable for them to be exposed to in the privacy of a locker room or bathroom. To take it even one step further, how do we test someone's personal values and what their motives are? This just opens the door for sexual abuse from predators. We already have situations where that is prevalent. Why add to that when it would just increase the danger for these young girls?

Our country is fighting so much about equality and equity that we are not seeing the freedoms and protections that we are stripping from others in the process. The Save Woman's Sports Act provides us with the fairness and freedom for all athletes. Freedom is not a free for all. I kindly ask you to vote YES on HB 61. I would like to close with a quote from the famous Maya Angelou. **"Equal rights, fair play, justice, are all like the air: we all have it, or none of us have it. That is the truth of it."**

Thank you and God bless,

Kathryn Byers

