

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Conner McLaren and I use she/her pronouns. I am a 17-year-old transgender girl who has played middle school and high school sports here in Ohio. I am here today to ask you not to include the amendment to House Bill 151 that bans transgender girls from playing on girl's sports teams.

I remember a blistering hot August day during conditioning for field hockey last summer when my team formed a deep bond of shared misery. For those of you unfamiliar with the conditioning exercise called suicides, it's when you sprint back and forth across a set distance until you feel like you are going to throw up. It's horrible. Our coach said that the first 5 girls who finished their sprints didn't have to continue. Of course we all wanted to be those first 5 girls because suicides are hated as much as burpees. So how did I finish that first set? I was dead last. What I remember most was not how horrible it felt to know that I'd have more sprints to run, or that I was the slowest on the team. What I remember most was that every one of those 5 girls kept running with us. They ran each sprint with the team. And when I, the slowest on the team, was finally running my final sprint, one of the Senior girls ran with me. She never stopped. Girls were cheering me on. There were even girls on the ground panting from their sprints and still cheering for me. They made me feel important, and like a member of the team because we don't leave members of the team behind.

I understand from reading about this bill that many of you are worried about saving women's sports. I ask you, how long has it been since you actually played

high school sports? My team wasn't at all worried that they were playing with a trans girl. What we were most upset about was that our school never had the concession stand open during our games, only the boy's football games had concessions. We also were really upset that we had to raise our own money for our uniforms while the school bought the football team theirs. The football team got priority for practice time on the field and always got their first choice, mornings and evenings. So, while I can understand that you want to save women's sports, I suggest that you actually talk to the girls on the teams to find out what is most important to them. I can tell you that it's not me.

Some of you may be wondering what the girls on my team said when they found out I was transgender. Well, I played sports for three years so there were always new girls to tell each season. The extent of the conversation was generally, "Oh okay, cool." My coaches were supportive. My team was supportive. I never would have known that this was an issue until last year when my family and I heard about the legislation.

I think it's annoying that I don't get to turn in the same physical forms each year that the rest of the girls do. The Ohio High School Athletic Association has worked with my coaches each year that I ran cross-country or played field hockey to ensure the additional paperwork for them was completed and approved before I could compete in any games. This required a visit to someone on my medical team to do the standard physical, but also to get my labs updated to send in to them along with a letter from my doctor to show that I did not have a biologic advantage over other girls. While I found this annoying and kind of intrusive, and also kind of

ridiculous since I've been on hormone blockers and gender-affirming hormones, I understood that it was part of the process if I wanted to play sports.

The girls on my team aren't worried about trans girls destroying women's sports. They are more worried about unfair advantages given to more visible sports like boys football because it impacts how many coaches we have, how much time we get to spend in the weight room, how outdated our uniforms or equipment is, and how much access girls get in order to even get good enough to win scholarships or get good enough to play on college teams. If you're worried about saving women's sports, I'd start there.