

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee:

Transgender girls and women deserve the opportunity to build community in sports – not be ostracized.

House Bill 151 is legislation in search of a problem that does not exist and represents state-sanctioned bullying against an already marginalized population. Participation in team sports is a common way for children and young adults to build community, and LGBTQ Ohioans have every right to join in these activities. In the Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, nearly 1 in 5 transgender and nonbinary youth attempted suicide. Their report also shows that LGBTQ kids who live in an accepting community report significantly lower rates of attempting suicide compared with those who do not. LGBTQ youth deserve to feel safe and supported by their communities.

In addition to the emotional harm, this bill threatens to invade the privacy of all Ohioans who participate in sports. Under HB 151, anyone, for any reason, can dispute a player's sex, forcing the player to provide their original birth certificate to establish their sex.

Let's focus on supporting transgender and gender-nonconforming Ohioans, not isolating them further with harmful legislation.

Sincerely,

Melissa Kelley