

Lauryn DeLuca

Thank you for considering my concerns raised in opposition to House Bill 151 and Senate Bill 132, the Save Women's Sports Act. This dangerous legislation targets an already vulnerable group of Ohio youth and denies them the often life saving opportunity to participate in sports.

Allow me to introduce myself! I'm Lauryn DeLuca, a student at Ohio State and a US Paralympian (Fencing, Rio 2016) from Parma, Ohio.

My career in sports has taught me many things like hard work, goal setting, and endurance. Sport allows athletes for a moment to take a step away from their complicated lives to just live out a dream, to be something else, to win.

Sport allows someone a chance to interact with peers, building social and collaborative skills. Through triumphs and losses, as an athlete you learn grit and resilience. You even learn how to manage stress and keep cool under pressure. I know this as in fencing you had a small target to hit in seconds. If the stress was too much, you lost.

Sport gives all kids real life lessons presented to them in a safe environment. To take away that chance from trans kids means putting them at a disadvantage from their cisgender peers.

Children also have the right to move, to represent, to thrive. If this bill passes... you are taking these fundamental rights of children away from so many.

Having trans teammates from an early age will also teach cisgender children more about inclusion and how to accept others as they are. I believe these are skills that every child needs to be a great future leader.

I think back to my time at the Paralympics and during the qualifying period. Everyone did not care about my ability, sexuality, or gender. They just cared if I was good and was having fun. My competitors were happy to see me and we celebrated a moment that was meant for global unity. It was great to be seen as Lauryn. Nothing else.

Sport is already a place that accepts differences. Prohibiting Trans kids from sports will take away the fact that sport is a safe place as many.

If this is passed, it creates a precedent that will allow the barring of anyone with a specific non dominant identity to not participate in sport. There goes athletes like Megan Rapinoe, Sue Bird, Ibtihaj Muhammad, Billie Jean King, Michael Sam, Muhammad Ali, Ian Kinsler and many more.

Thank you. I urge you to oppose HB151 and SB132 and protect our state's athletes.