

Opponent Testimony for HB6
House Higher Education Committee
April 19, 2023

Alicia Burkle

Chairman Young, Representative Powell, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Alicia Burkle. I am a cis-gender mom of a high school freshman and a fourth grader as well as a former high school and college athlete. I am submitting testimony today to express my concern with and opposition of the entirety of HB6.

I was born and raised in rural Pennsylvania, approximately 250 miles away, but the landscape is very similar. I grew up playing pick-up games, summer recreational league softball, high school softball, volleyball, and track and field. In my rural community, there was not much to do, if you were not playing sports. I loved everything about the game: the competition, the teamwork, the personal development, and the lasting relationships I created over the many years. Playing sports was truly a way of life in my community and when my husband and I relocated to Ohio, 16 years ago, we could see the same sense of community here in Ohio. HB6 seems to directly contradict that way of life for transgender youth, by dehumanizing them and forcing them to play on a team in which they do not identify and will almost certainly experience bullying, or not play sports at all.

HB6 creates more discrimination rather than preventing it. Given the OHSAA¹, NCAA², and International Olympic Committee³ all have clearly established policies detailing the inclusion criteria for transgender athletes, based on years of research, it seems unnecessary for the state of Ohio to create a separate policy that contradicts the well-established guidance created and vetted by the experts of these governing bodies.

Next door, while you are hearing opponent testimony on HB6, the Health Policy Committee is hearing Sponsor Testimony on HB68, yet another bill aimed at targeting and dehumanizing transgender youth. These bills are part of a larger national trend of singling out transgender youth, normalizing bullying, and forcing families to make difficult decisions for the health and safety of their children. The state of Ohio is now at a crossroads. Will it join the growing list of states that families are leaving or choosing not to live in because it is unsafe for their children, or take a stand for ALL residents of Ohio

and be a welcoming state that allows families to do what is right and safe for their children?

HB6 is known as the "Save Women's Sports Act". I implore you to first recognize that transgender women ARE women. Instead of continually discriminating and dehumanizing transgender youth, your time, energy, and resources should be spent on empowering all women and ensuring gender equality for all. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no on HB6. Thank you.

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1. OHSAA Transgender Student Policy.
<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Eligibility/OtherEligibilityDocs/TransgenderPolicy.pdf>
 2. NCAA Student-Athlete Participation Policy.
<https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2022/1/27/transgender-participation-policy.aspx>
 3. IOC Framework on Fairness, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sex Variations
https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/News/2021/11/IOC-Framework-Fairness-Inclusion-Non-discrimination-2021.pdf#_ga=2.209706837.679659290.1681743833-1643225052.1681743833