

Sarah Pickle

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April 17, 2023

Tom Young  
Chair, Higher Education Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chair Young, Ranking Member Miller, and the Members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Dr. Sarah Pickle, and I am a practicing family medicine physician. I have over 13 years' experience in caring for patients and am currently licensed to practice in Ohio. The majority of my patients are transgender, gender diverse, or non-binary. It is within this context of experience that I **oppose House Bill 6**, which is discriminatory and violates the rights of transgender athletes to equal access to opportunities.

Inclusive policies that allow transgender athletes to participate in sports consistent with their gender identity are grounded in scientific evidence and promote fairness, safety, and inclusivity for all athletes. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and other major sports organizations have adopted policies that allow transgender athletes to compete in sports consistent with their gender identity, provided certain criteria are met. Further, the [Ohio High School Athletic Association \(OHSAA\)](#), has an effective guideline in place for transgender athletes. Of the 400,000 student athletes participating in grades 7-12 athletics in the state, only 3 transgender students have been approved to participate in this spring sports season according to OHSAA. That is 0.0000075% of the student athlete population.

Studies have shown that allowing transgender athletes to participate in sports consistent with their gender identity does not give them an athletic advantage over their cisgender peers.

- Harper, J., & Jones, B. A. (2016). Sexual dimorphism in sports: more complex than just testosterone. *Sports medicine (Auckland, NZ)*, 46(9), 1197-1202.
- Jones, B. A., Arcelus, J., Bouman, W. P., & Haycraft, E. (2017). Sport and transgender people: a systematic review of the literature relating to sport participation and competitive sport policies. *Sports medicine (Auckland, NZ)*, 47(4), 701-716.
- Tuiten, M., Pijnenburg, L., van de Grift, T. C., Bouman, M. B., de Vries, A. L., & Buncamper, M. E. (2020). Transgender women in elite sport: Scientific and ethical considerations. *Journal of clinical medicine*, 9(11), 3729.

These studies have found that transgender athletes do not have an inherent athletic advantage over their cisgender peers when allowed to compete in sports consistent with their gender identity. Rather, performance differences are primarily attributed to factors such as training and experience.

Additional [Data](#) from The Trevor Project shows us that when we debate legislation regarding transgender youth, it directly harms the mental health of all LGBTQ+ youth. Any legislation that aims to restrict who can participate in youth sports threatens all youth. Moreover, inclusive policies that allow transgender athletes to participate in sports benefit all athletes, as they promote a culture of respect, diversity, and inclusivity. When all athletes feel welcome and valued, they are more likely to thrive, develop positive self-esteem, and perform better in sports.

Considering this evidence, I urge you to support policies that promote inclusivity, respect, and equality for all individuals, including transgender athletes and **oppose House Bill 6**. Let us work together to create a culture of inclusivity and respect in school sports.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Pickle, MD