

Chairman, members of the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, my name is Halle Martin. Thank you for allowing me to provide this testimony.

As a cisgender woman and parent of cisgender daughters, I'm frightened by HB6. Being on a team (dance, gymnastics, cheerleading) was so important to my daughters and their mental (as well as physical) well-being. But high school girls are mean and high school girls are competitive. We've all seen the movies. They're funny because they're caricatures; the situations are relatable and uncomfortably real. My own girls experienced lies and back stabbing and jockeying for a coach's favor or a leg up to make captain. Most girls do. So you can bet that if you give them the opportunity through this bill, there will certainly be unscrupulous girls and parents who use this bill as a weapon to bully cisgender female athletes and make them establish their biological sex by examining genitals, testing testosterone levels or analyzing genetic makeup. The idea of cisgender girls being bullied into having to prove their female-ness is simply wrong. If HB6 passes, I'm frightened for cisgender girls.

As a taxpayer, constituent and long-time Republican, I'm mystified by HB6. There's no need for legislation. The OHSAA, as well as the NCAA, have long had policies in place to address this issue. They allow transgender athletes to participate AND prohibit men from entering women's events. I hope each of you has read their policies. The OHSAA's policy specifically recognizes "transgender student athletes should have equal opportunity to participate in sports" AND recognizes "the integrity of women's sports should be preserved." Those two things are not at odds. They just require nuance rather than a legislative ban. The OHSAA has been successfully dealing in that nuance for years. In Ohio, a transgender girl can't compete unless she's been on hormone therapy for a year or medically demonstrates that she doesn't possess a physical advantage. For this school year, ONLY ONE Ohio transgender high school girl has been approved to play sports on a girls' team. I believe that she's provided testimony before this Committee with respect to this bill so you're familiar with her story. There's no need for this bill. Is this Assembly really spending its time holding hearings to stop ONE high school athlete from competing? I'm mystified.

As a former C-suite executive of an Ohio-based public company, I'm concerned about the fiscal ramifications of HB6. Is Ohio becoming so unfriendly to trans students that they won't look at Ohio colleges? Will the NCAA ban tournament competition taking place in Ohio? How much money will that cost our state? Aside from collegiate sports-related revenue, research has shown that publicly held business with LGBTQ-friendly policies have higher profitability. Abercrombie & Fitch, a local company, is one of only 842 companies nationally to earn a 100% rating and designation of Best Place to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality from Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Ohio large employers Abercrombie & Fitch, Cardinal Health, Intel and Nestle USA are only a few of the signatories to the Human Rights Campaign Business Statement Opposing Anti-LGBTQ State Legislation, which says, in part:

"We are deeply concerned by the bills being introduced in state houses across the country that single out LGBTQ individuals – many specifically targeting transgender youth – for exclusion or differential treatment. ... These bills would harm our team members and their families...

As such, it can be exceedingly difficult for us to recruit the most qualified candidates for jobs in states that pursue such laws, and these measures can place substantial burdens on families of our employees who already reside in these states. ...

As we make complex decisions about where to invest and grow, these issues can influence our decisions. **America's business community has consistently communicated to lawmakers at every level that such laws have a negative effect on our employees, our customers, our competitiveness, and state and national economies.**

As business leaders dedicated to equal treatment, respect, and opportunity for all - as well as to improving the financial and investment climate across the country - **we call for public leaders to abandon or oppose efforts to enact this type of discriminatory legislation and ensure fairness for all Americans.**" (emphasis in original)

Is Ohio becoming so unfriendly to trans folks that businesses will be reluctant to come to the State or move jobs away from the state to preserve their ideals? Is this issue that impacts such a small number of people worth alienating Ohio businesses who employ trans people and the friends and relatives of trans people? I'm concerned.

Finally, as the parent of a transgender child, I'm disgusted by HB6. This bill prevents transgender girls from participating in sports which contribute to their well-being. Medical experts have concluded that any physical advantages a transgender female arguably may have had as a result of her prior testosterone levels dissipate after about one year of estrogen or testosterone-suppression therapy. The assumption that a transgender girl would have a competitive advantage outside the range of variability that already exists among female athletes is simply unsupported by medical evidence. So this bill doesn't appear to be about fairness. Rather, it appears to be part of a nationwide campaign by a few outside ultra-conservative groups to abolish transgender people. The good people serving in this Assembly shouldn't be deceived into believing that this is about protecting girls. By introducing this bill and other anti-transgender legislation, Ohio has clearly sent its message that transgender people are subhuman. I'm disgusted.

On some level, sadly, I get it. These outside political operatives excel at obfuscating and championing their anti-transgender agenda. On this particular issue, I understand the immediate reaction that it **MUST** be unfair for a biological boy to compete against girls. I'm ashamed to admit that was also my gut reaction. And even with a transgender child, I had to give a lot of thought to the sports issue. But it's a red herring. It's a set-up and a stepping stone. I hope these hearings are a chance for you to study the issue's scope and the science and the policies already in place and to consider the motivation behind this nationwide tide of anti-trans bills. And then, I hope you will see that this is an agenda issue for a few hateful people. It is not a matter of importance – and in fact could be harmful - to our state and your constituencies as a whole. Please vote against HB6 and protect ALL girls in sports in Ohio.