

April 18, 2023

Higher Education Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
1 Capitol Square, Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Opponent to HB 6

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller and members of the Ohio House Higher Education Committee:

My name is Allison Ritting and I am a resident of Columbus, Ohio. I am writing to voice my concern about a dangerous bill being heard in the House Higher Education Committee. HB 6, the so-called "Save Women's Sports Act", seeks to harm transgender girls and women by preventing participation in sports and encouraging bullying and isolation. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, pediatric healthcare provider, and former NCAA athlete, I believe that this bill is a direct threat to the wellbeing of transgender athletes.

Participation in sports contributes to many important aspects of childhood development, including physical, social, and emotional skills. Youth sports also create an environment in which individuals can make valuable friendships, establish connections, and learn interpersonal skills. As a pediatric healthcare provider specializing in childhood development, I have seen firsthand the value and impact of participation in sports. Children deserve to participate in meaningful, developmentally appropriate activities without fear of isolation or bullying for their gender identity. This legislature includes provisions that will directly increase stigma towards transgender youth, contributing to increased isolation from peers and negative mental health outcomes.

This bill is based on rhetoric grounded in false information. The Ohio High School Athletic Association and NCAA have existing policies in place to ensure that sports are fair and accessible to all. Transgender people comprise 1.6% of the human population, and only 34 transgender people have openly competed in U.S. college sports. I speak from the perspective of a four-year NCAA collegiate athlete who has competed at the championship level. My athletic career has lent me invaluable experiences. Everyone deserves access to such experiences, regardless of gender identity. I stand for the rights of transgender girls and women to participate in sports at any level.

HB 6 sets a dangerous precedent that will encourage the stigmatization and isolation of transgender girls and women. Therefore, I request that you do not support this bill and vote no if it comes up for a vote. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in opposition to HB 6.

Sincerely,

Allison Ritting

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