

April 17, 2023

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

My name is Laura Robertson-Boyd. I live in Columbus, Ohio with my husband of 25 years. We are the proud parents of two transgender kids. Both enjoyed participating on sports teams in high school, and one still participates on a sports team at a university located in Ohio.

I am writing to express our opposition to HB6 – a solution in search of a problem that does not exist. In Ohio, the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the NCAA already have strict policies in place that transgender women and girls must meet before they can be approved to participate on women's and girls' sports teams, and those conditions must be re-evaluated annually, ensuring transgender women do not possess a competitive advantage over cisgender female athletes. This system is working well – there is no need for the Legislature to intervene.

Students learn a lot of important life lessons in sports: leadership, confidence, self-respect, and what it means to be part of a team. Transgender kids, like other students, deserve the same chances to learn teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, and self-discipline, and to build a sense of belonging with their peers. When we tell transgender girls that they can't play girls' sports—they miss out on this important childhood experience and all the lessons it teaches.

Furthermore, transgender kids want the opportunity to play sports for the same reason other kids do: to be a part of a team where they feel like they belong. We shouldn't discriminate against kids and ban them from playing because they're transgender. As a nation, we decided long ago that discrimination is wrong and that everyone should have the same opportunities to succeed in life—and that should include transgender youth. Schools across the country know that transgender students, like any student, thrive when they're treated with dignity and respect. When school officials recognize that a transgender girl is a girl during the school day, but then treat her as if she's a boy when sports practice starts, it's hurtful to the student and disrupts the school's policy of treating all kids fairly.

At the end of the day, we need to acknowledge what this is really about: whether LGBTQ+ people should be treated fairly across all areas of life—or whether they can be unfairly kicked out of a restaurant, denied an apartment, or denied the health care they need, just because of who they are.

I urge you to reject discrimination and instead stand up for recognizing that all people – regardless of their identities – are entitled to human and civil rights in all areas of life. I urge you to vote no on HB6.

Thank you.
Laura Robertson-Boyd