



Higher Education Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

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April 19, 2023

RE: HB 6 "Save Women's Sports Act" or the trans youth sports ban - *oppositional testimony*

Dear Chair Rep. Young and respected Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on this important issue. This is the first opportunity to testify against this bill, but you may recognize me from previous hearings on similar bills. My name is James Knapp. I'm an attorney in the northeast Ohio area, and I have the pleasure to serve as Board of Directors of TransOhio, Ohio's first state-wide transgender equality organization.

Founded in 2005, TransOhio is a trans-led group of volunteers dedicated to education, advocacy, support, and providing community to trans people and their allies. TransOhio has worked with local, state, and national efforts to draft and update policies related to transgender people, such as nondiscrimination ordinances, employee policies, student handbooks, etc. We've spoken with school districts, educators, student clubs, and interest groups. TransOhio has provided educational trainings to church groups, civil groups, corporate employees, volunteers, providers, and allies. Along with our community partners, we host the Ohio Name Change Legal Clinic, which helps trans folks and their parents better understand the legal process of changing identity documents. TransOhio host the annual Trans & Ally Symposium, now in its 14th year, to help foster community and to better educate allies of the greater trans communities. We support support groups across the state and hold events from Toledo to Cininnati. TransOhio is very in tune with the trans community here in Ohio. You are not.

Let us educate you. Transgender people have existed since before recorded history. It's not a "woke" phenomenon. That you haven't heard about transgender people until laws impacting their human rights started being introduced in other states—and now this one—says more about you than it does trans people. That you haven't heard of a single case of a trans student athlete "stealing" a metal or scholarship until recent years says even more. Because it has never happened. There isn't a single instance in Ohio or elsewhere of a trans student athlete receiving a scholarship based on her athletic performance. And trans girls and women have been able to play sports on the teams consistent with their gender identity since before 2014, when OHSAA instituted its first policy guidance on transgender student participation in team sports. The NCAA also allows trans student athletes to participate. This bill would frustrate long-standing policies that have been working for over a decade.

We would like to clarify some basic principles that seem to be confusing: *trans girls are girls*; they are not “biological boys” or “students of the male sex.” Trans girls have been participating in solo and team sports in Ohio for decades. Trans girls are not a threat to cis (not trans) girls. In fact, trans athletes are part of the team. This bill is poor sportsmanship. It’s discriminatory. It’s unnecessary. And it’s unconstitutional.

TransOhio opposes restricting access to athletic activities and other extra-curricular activities. Prohibiting participation in school sports based on a student’s “transgender status,” including requiring that trans students prove their gender through birth records, is likely unlawful under both current and proposed guidance under federal Title IX.

We urge you to **vote no**. Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact us with any questions. We welcome further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,
TransOhio Board of Directors

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