



603 E. Town St.
Columbus, OH 43215

info@kycohoio.org
614-294-5437

April 19, 2023

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

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller and members of the Ohio House Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 6. My name is Lane Shirrell, and I use they/them pronouns. I am the Community Education and Research Manager for Kaleidoscope Youth Center.

The sun is hot. A half deflated ball flies between the neighborhood kids, parents sipping cold drinks as they commune on porches. The kids' hearts race and pitch with each turn in the narrative of the game. Underdogs cheering and spirits deflating as the game takes shape.

The game slows, other players making space for Riley, a bookish kid with asthma, to shoot the winning goal. The field is silent, anticipation buzzing in through the air. As the ball reaches its target, the children erupt in screams, piling onto Riley. A smile creeps at his cheeks, quiet elation blooming in his heart.

Across the field, Janet stands with her arms crossed, her face burning. Defeat leaves a bitter taste in her mouth. Her footsteps are heavy as she walks toward the crowd. Up close, she can see the small smile on Riley's face. Although the sting of defeat is not quenched, it lessens at the sight.

When Riley is back on the ground, he offers Janet a hand. "Good game, Janet."

She takes his hand, and pulls him closer, "Same time, same place tomorrow," and stalks off. The game replays in her head, analyzing her team's strategy for next time.

As the sun dips below the houses across the street, children walk, sweat soaked, back inside, heralding the stories of fresh bruises and strawberries, battle scars from the day.



This narrative is recreated across the country in every neighborhood. You might even be picturing your own childhood summers.

These games teach children sportsmanship in accepting wins and losses. They teach the value of hard work, and inclusion. How would it feel to be deprived of these valuable experiences because your hair is brown, or because your eyes are green? How would it feel if the parents on their porches held a city-wide meeting about whether or not you should play, because they took issue with you, with an aspect of your identity that you couldn't control?

Would your face heat with shame whenever you passed the children who could play? Would you miss the excitement of rooting for your team? Would you wonder what you had done to deserve to be treated as a Pariah?

Currently the Ohio High School Athletic Association guidelines require transgender female athletes to (1) have completed a minimum of one year of hormone treatment related to gender transition and/or (2) demonstrate evidence that she does not possess physical (bone structure, muscle mass, testosterone, hormonal, etc.) or physiological advantages over genetic females of the same age group.

For individuals who are all about banning access to gender affirming care for minors in order to preserve the sanctity of their sex assigned at birth, this policy, which is the ONLY way for trans femme athletes to compete, not only invades the privacy of the individual but also MANDATES a medical transition. While this policy is in no way ideal, it does a better job of creating equity in sports than HB6. There are so few trans female athletes competing for titles and scholarships it does not warrant such use of our time and resources to solve this issue.

Extend empathy to the young people you are harming in holding hearings like this one. The emotional damage has already been done by this bill. Do not allow this governing body to continue to marginalize a very small group of people because there are bigger, more complicated issues that need to be addressed in the state of Ohio. Take a hard look at your priorities. Vote no on HB6.

