

**Testimony Opposing House Bill 6
House Higher Education Committee**

Submitted by: Shaker Heights Board of Education

President: Dr. Emmitt Jolly

Vice President: Lora Cover

Member: Alison Bibb-Carson

Member: Jeff Isaacs

Member: Heather Weingart

Chair Young, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for affording us the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 6. We are the Board of Education for Shaker Heights, OH.

This bill would require schools to establish separate single-sex athletic teams for females and males, would ban males from participating on female teams and allow civil actions for violations.

We oppose this legislation for three reasons.

First, HB6 targets transgender girls and women students. We know the devastating effects marginalization has on our young people. Over the pandemic we have seen our students isolated. This bill would further isolate some of our students and subject them to sanctioned harassment, preventing them from playing the sports they love.

Second, this bill would have a devastating effect on the LGBTQIA+ community. This bill would decrease the opportunities for leadership, confidence and social connections based on a student's gender. Denying these opportunities to some students is discriminatory and suggests to our young people that in Ohio, we do not treat people with equal decency and respect.

Finally, this bill is unnecessary. The Ohio High School Athletic Association and the NCAA already have policies that govern student athletics to ensure fair and accessible experiences for all students. In addition, the only students to testify for this bill are in opposition. Who, exactly, is this bill meant to protect? This bill is only meant to harm students, both who identify as transgender and their teammates.

This action is both deeply inequitable and goes against the values that we stand for in Shaker Heights. The Shaker Heights School District stands on three pillars: **Excellence, Equity and Exploration**. We teach our students to ask questions, think critically and be reflective in order to create a more just world. We ask that you think critically and be reflective on your part to create a more just world.

We respectfully request that this committee vote no on this bill which will place a tremendous burden on a subset of our students for political reasons not at all tied to excellence, equity and exploration.

Shaker Heights Board of Education