



December 6, 2023
Senate Government Oversight Committee
SB 68 Opponent Testimony
Submitted by Melissa Cropper, President Ohio Federation of Teachers

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, and Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, I am Melissa Cropper, President of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT). Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB 68.

OFT represents thousands of teachers, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, and other educators and school staff in urban, suburban, and rural school districts, and in community and technical colleges statewide. One of the core responsibilities for our members in these settings, regardless of their job title, is to create a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students. HB 68, particularly the section of the bill regarding sports teams, would make that nearly impossible by writing discrimination into the law.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association and the National Collegiate Athletic Association have both already implemented detailed policies that ensure that trans students have equal opportunity while maintaining fair competition in women's sports. Throwing these carefully and thoughtfully crafted policies out in favor of widespread discrimination of trans athletes doesn't benefit students or address any actual problems in Ohio's schools, colleges and universities.

Instead, passing HB 68 would send a harmful message to trans and non-binary students that they are not welcome and that it is not safe for them to be themselves in our schools. Multiple studies have shown that trans youth attempt suicide at much higher rates than their peers. Bills like HB 68, and the hate and scapegoating that they feed into, put these students at an even greater risk.

Every student, no matter what they look like or how they identify, deserves respect and equal opportunity. Please turn away from divisive culture-war politics that seek to pit Ohioans against each other. Please stand up for Ohio students and reject HB 68.