

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Bird and members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, may I first thank you for the opportunity to give testimony as a proponent on House 61.

Secondly, I would like to give you a quick look at my background in sports in the state of Ohio, as well as, in the state of West Virginia. In the fall of 1969, I started as a sports writer with the Times Leader in Martins Ferry. I was only 16. While I have never worked on a full time basis in the media, I have clocked many hours. This year, I am planning to make it my last after 53 years. Without going into detail, I have covered all levels of sports and I have covered all types of sports.

In addition, I have a baseball coaching background that covers over 30 years and includes levels from t-ball to being a high school head coach.

And finally, as an active member of the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference that includes 50 schools in two states, I have served as the first (and so far) the only Basketball Championships Director for both boys and girls during the past 15 years and have been the championship director for volleyball over the past 10 years.

None of these have been my full time job.

Do I have a passion for sports? Yes. Do I have an understanding of the history and how the sports have evolved in Ohio over the year? Yes, I do.

I have no problem with our administration in Washington and I'm not here for political reasons or to bash anyone in government. I am here because of my concern for the welfare of women's sports in Ohio. It has taken a long time for women's sports to get to where they are today and I believe that without passage of HB 61, the evolving of women's sports will stop and begin to recede.

Let me say first that I do not have a dog in the fight. In other words, I have daughters or granddaughters playing sports at any level and have none on the horizon. My interest is entirely based on my experience in the sports world and my beliefs that without HB 61, more harm than good is guaranteed.

Through the years, girls' sports have evolved greatly. Not only has it attracted more fans and student support, but it has improved a great deal in terms of quality of play and opportunity at more levels.

I'm reminded of a story that I have told so many times from the mid-70s when I served as the league president for Pony baseball in Warren Township. I was a young president in charge of much older coaches, but when registration day came prior to one season a 12-year old girl came in to register for baseball. There was no softball or summer sports for girls. When the coaches met, they agreed that if I let the girl play baseball that all of the coaches would quit. So, I contacted a few women that I knew and asked if they would help form a softball league. I also told the baseball league that they would need seed money to start. So, a \$1000 and a handful of women that had never played and I as the commissioner and instructor formed the Warren Township Girls Softball. That league has flourished over the years.

Girls' softball, as well as basketball, volleyball, track, golf, bowling and soccer have grown through hard work, tremendous support, improving facilities and increased opportunity To get to where those sports are today.

Now, they face another obstacle that male sports have not been troubled with. Biological males playing sports designed for biological girls. Smaller basketballs, shorter bases and pitching mounds, closer tees not to mention the lack of sufficient speed, strength, jumping ability, arm strength, all major differences in the two.

There is a reason why boys scoring records are not compared to their female counterparts; why speeds in sprints and distances aren't compared, why so many records are vastly different in numbers. The reason is that girls and boys sports are different. They are designed for different participants – male and female.

Allowing the biological male to participate in a female sports will deprive the female athlete of an opportunity to participate, to earn a letter, to start and to possibly earned a scholarship to a college or university (one that they could not afford).

And finally, the senior boy that sets a new record at the women's track meet not only denies the same opportunity to the girls competing, but if three, four, five years later, their choice of sex identification changes to male?? Do the records get wiped off the books? Are the girls, now out of school, get a year or two of eligibility back to compete again.

Women's sports have come a long way through the years and still have a ways to go. Do you send them backwards in development or do you pass House Bill 61 to allow Women's Sports to continue to grow.

Thank you so much for your time,

Rick DeLuca

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