
HB 6 – Personal Testimony

03.28.2023

Thank you Chair and Members of this committee. I was introduced to sports at the age of six and enjoyed participating on many levels throughout the school years that followed. At the time I began participating, there were not many competitive leagues for girls. Many times I was the only female participant on soccer, basketball, and baseball teams. I loved the training, the camaraderie, and the competition. The boys I participated with were my friends. We attended camps together and we celebrated wins and shared losses together. This went on for many years until the teenage years began. I vividly recall approaching freshman year in high school and considering a fall sports selection. I had played competitive soccer with a boys travel group in the many years leading up to high school. There was not a girls soccer team at our high school at this time. I recall my teammates and coaches encouraging me that I could tryout and play for the boys team, and continue with my friends that I had trained with for many years. However, at that time I began to realize that as fierce and committed as I was to my training and love of the game, the boys I had grown up competing with began to have an edge. The slide tackles and the contact began to be laced with a slight fear for me which I had not experienced. Ultimately, I selected to pick up a tennis racket for the first time and tryout for the girls tennis team that fall.

As a three sport athlete in high school, basketball began to separate itself as my main focus. I practiced joyfully and intensely daily. It was an outlet that in reflection provided benefits that would take hours to give accurate praise. The only edge I ever felt I had on my competition was that I could outwork them. The personally committed hours, supportive family, competitive teammates, knowledgeable coaches, supportive community, divine timing, and Title IX provisions culminated into receiving a full basketball scholarship to The Ohio State University. Becoming the first individual in my family to attend college and having the privilege to play in the 1993 National Championship NCAA Women's Basketball final game representing The Ohio State University and our wonderful Buckeye State. It was a dream team that year! We had the best coaches under the leadership of head coach Nancy Darsch. We had a highly skilled and supportive strength and conditioning coach, compassionate top-level trainers, selfless team managers, supportive families, and loyal fans. As players we pushed our minds and bodies to the edge. Phyllis Bailey was the first Women's Basketball Coach ever at The Ohio State University and the first Administrator over women's athletics. She was a Title IX Champion. We were blessed to

have a pioneer for women's sports and equality as one of our administrators during that time. I remember Ms. Bailey sitting in on our practices and supporting us as we fought our way to the National Championship Game. Her support mattered and the depth of her presence is memorable. We came up short by two points as we faced a 47 point performance by Sheryl Swoopes of Texas Tech. We left it all on the floor and we were sad and disappointed by the loss, but we all innately knew in the end...it was fair. They were the better team that day. This year, The Ohio State Women's Basketball Team advanced to the Elite 8 in the NCAA Tournament. It was the first time since our 1993 Season that a team has advanced to the Elite Eight. This past Monday they fell short of advancing to the Final Four. Today, the next season of training begins for some of them.

I believe the conversation we are having is important. I believe people should be heard. I believe the silence and science of truth is foundational. I believe that honoring the biological gift set differences between biological males and biological females is important. I believe we should consider that for some athletes their team connection may be the first safe and fair family that they have experienced. I am so grateful for courageous leaders like Ms. Phyllis Bailey and Coach Nancy Darsch and others who fought for the opportunities biological females have to equally pursue excellence in sport alongside their biologically male counterparts. It is a privilege and an awesome responsibility to ensure coaches are aware of, and honor male and female supernatural biological differences and how they can affect safety and fairness in competitive sport. I believe it is important that female athletes can TRUST adult coaches and governing bodies to seek and uphold truth and equality. I believe there is freedom in winning and losing when Truth is the foundation.

Finally, my hope is that all lights in the stadiums and on the courts across our great State of Ohio will continue to shine brightly on safe and fair playing fields, and that all athletes can play. I hope that HB6 ensures that no lights are dimmed in sport and that considerations maintain truth, safety, and fairness as a foundation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience as a female competitive athlete.

Sincerely,

Lisa Sebastian