

April 17, 2023

Ohio Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee
1 Capitol Square Columbus, OH 43215

Chairman Young, Vice Chair Dobos, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the Ohio House Higher Education Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today against House Bill 6. I am Josie Snowball and I use she/her pronouns. I am fourteen years old so I attend St. Cecilia and I am about to become a freshman in high school. I take accelerated high school classes: algebra and spanish. I also just received word that I won the COACE scholarship for my school. Additionally, I play volleyball for my school and swim for the YMCA. I love swimming. I have quite literally been swimming for as long as I can remember. Practicing day in and day out, I've worked hard and I'm proud of my accomplishments in swimming.

This season, at championships, I won gold in the 400 yard IM, silver in the 1000 yard free and the 200 yard butterfly, and bronze in the 1650 yard free (which is a mile). I have dedicated a lot of my time to get where I am today in sports. I've felt the pain of a grueling workout and suffered at the wrath of my coaches pushing me to go farther. Sports, in return, has given me friends, made me stronger, healthier, happier, and given meaning to my life.

House Bill 6 is stripping transgender women of the benefits that come with sports. For example, One of my friends on my swim team (that is a year older than me), who I will not be naming for their safety, is a transgender woman and loves swimming. Before she came out to me she wore swim trunks, she looked uncomfortable. She didn't smile as she does now and you could see that she felt exposed. But when she wore that one piece swimsuit there was an obvious difference. She was friendly, more confident, and seemed happier. This was a huge step for her because wearing feminine attire can be difficult for any transgender person transitioning to be a girl, and swimsuits expose a lot of their body, so to be able to wear a one piece is really brave. It shows tenacity, defiance, and courage, which are fabulous qualities to have. Taking away the opportunities to play sports comfortably deprives trans athletes of the benefits of sports.

What's more, despite the wonderful qualities of this swimmer, many people have told me REPEATEDLY that transgender women have a biological unfair advantage against the other women. So I would like to inform you that when I practice we don't split up into boys and girls, we swim by skill level. Which means that I swim with BOTH boys AND girls. The coaches do this so you're challenged by your teammates and help push them as well. For instance, when the lane is doing backstroke I go first because I'm faster, but also because it pushes everyone else to keep up with my pace. Or like when my trans friend and another friend on the team are competing to be first in breaststroke because they pretty much are the same speed, I'm trying my hardest to keep up with them.

This means that our times aren't that far apart either. For example, in the 50 yard free my trans friend has a time of 33.15 and I have a time of 32.57. That's only a difference of 0.58, which lets be honest isn't that big. While in the 100 yard butterfly, I have a time of 1:30.26 and my friend has a time of 1:44.03, which is a much bigger difference, 13.77 seconds to be exact. If she put as much effort as I did into the butterfly, she might be faster, but if I put more time into the breaststroke I might improve my time of 1:39.14 to her 1:36.92.

In the end, sports and your abilities in it isn't based on gender, rather it's based on your effort, determination, discipline, and health. Everyone should be able to play sports as they are because in the end no one is taking opportunities away from anyone else, rather, we all push each

other to go faster and become stronger. Therefore, I beg you to vote against House Bill 6 and any other bills that discriminate against transgender people.