

I'm going to start this off by disclosing and disclaiming that I don't have much stake in this fight. I'm not a registered voter in Ohio, and we don't have a transgender child. We are however, a military family stationed in Ohio with 2 kids on IEPs and thousands of dollars in legal fees under our belt fighting for services they're already entitled to by law.

I'm also a parent advocate and have been volunteering as a surrogate parent for wards of the state that qualify for special education services since we moved here. In my solitary experience, I've seen more students whose needs are not being met, and an alarming number of students - fun fact, more than you've had waiver requests across the state within the same time frame - with an incorrect qualifier for services when there are more applicable diagnoses at play that go unsupported or addressed. In my opinion, as wards of the state, I think you have a higher level of responsibility to these kids to ensure that they are safe and supported in schools. So again, I'm frustrated that this bill is how time is being spent.

According to the most recent [enrollment data](#) from the ODE, there are over 1.7 million students served by Ohio's public schools. Over 270K of those are recognized as students with disabilities (not including those who have yet to be identified) accounting for about 15% of the student population (again, not including those not identified and therefore not getting any of the services they need to be successful). High school students account for 574,483, meaning last year's trans waiver rulings account for roughly <0.00007% of the HS population for BOTH male and female students. The point being, I'm disappointed that we're not here discussing statistically significant and relevant issues.

Reading this bill, looking at the numbers, taking the time to understand how this works, and the systems and checks and balances in place that currently permit trans students to play only after successfully completing the rigorous waiver process, I find the bill to be entirely disingenuous, and a gross misuse of time, energy, and resources. If the concern and intent were truly to "Save Women's Sports" maybe start with something like funding. Last year the NCAA released a report highlighting the

stark gap in funding for women's sports. I think we can all reasonably agree, putting personal convictions and party politics aside and looking at the numbers and data available, statistically, funding is the bigger issue that would make a far greater impact towards saving women's sports.

In the March 29 House committee hearing, you had a proponent speaker that shared stories of the women he's representing that claim harm and loss in sports to trans women. I would challenge the validity of this claim. Unless these women have never lost a game to anyone, this is not proof nor a reasonable argument to consider.

I understand the political ramifications at play here. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to recognize and understand that this is a party line issue, that may impact reelection campaigns, funding and support by party leadership, and the impact it may have on showing a unified front. But, call me an optimist, I do believe that everyone here came to politics with the intention of serving the greater good, and making meaningful and impactful changes. This isn't that. This is a frivolous and I believe dangerous misuse of public office. There are significant issues that need to be addressed within our schools that go ignored as this red herring dominates the conversation. I believe you can do better.

I'm opposed to HB68 because it has not demonstrated in any real way that this is an actual problem. Ohio already has a strict and stringent set of regulations and rules in place governing how this works, but a quick google search or simply having your offices pull numbers will quickly and easily demonstrate where your energy could and should be better spent if you want to improve schools, including sports programming, for our children.

I urge you to stop this unnecessary fight and focus your time and energy in fiscally and morally responsible ways that improve and enhance access within the public school system for ALL students. Our children NEED your support. We NEED you to do the job you were elected to do. This is not that. I think you can do better, but it's really up to you what you choose to do with your power. Just know that we are paying attention, and right now, we're not impressed.