

Opponent Testimony for HB 68
Senate Government Oversight Committee
12/04/23

Julia Phillips

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Julia Phillips (she/her/hers). I am a lifelong resident of Ohio, and currently reside in Maumee. I strongly oppose the SAFE and Save Women's Sports Acts.

As a cisgender woman who began my multi-sport athlete career in the first grade and continued through college when I won a Big Ten Championship with my NCAA Division One rowing team, I can tell you that the claims made by the "Save Women's Sports" section of this bill and its proponents are inaccurate. Us little-league to semi-professional athletes welcome transgender athletes to our playing field. I know that it is hugely important that transgender girls and women have the right to play alongside me and other cisgender girls and women.

I feel extremely fortunate to have been born with genitalia that fit my assigned gender identity, but not everyone has that luxury. However, every single individual has the **right** to feel that same comfort in their own skin. We fulfill this right by supporting everyone in everyday life, including in supporting transgender athletes in playing sports on teams of their affirmed gender.

This cruel piece of legislation singles out an already vulnerable population, young transgender people. Studies show this type of legislation is directly linked to serious harms among transgender young people. Trans people deserve to play sports, **especially** transgender kids who just want to be kids and play sports in school for fun, for community, for release, for competition - all things all children deserve access to on a team which they feel they belong to and are safe on. Excluding transgender people from normal activities isn't just wrong, its extremely harmful and causes major upticks in suicide rates and mental health issues.

Though proponents of this bill claim that it is designed to protect women's rights and women's sports, every major women's rights and women's sports organization opposes legislation of this kind (*25 organizations join WSF Letter to NCAA regarding Transgender Athlete Participation Policy*).

Reputable medical and civil rights organizations including the Ohio State Medical Association, the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Ohio Psychological Association, the Ohio Psychiatric Physicians Association, the Ohio Counseling Association, the Ohio Children's Hospital Association, the Cincinnati Children's Hospital, the Cleveland Clinic and its Children's

Hospital, the Nationwide Children's Hospital, the ACLU and ACLU of Ohio all oppose this bill. Just to name a few.

Many coaches claim that participation in sports prepares young people for success in life. Isn't that something we want for all children who want to participate? Taking this opportunity away from one group just because they're different is cruel. It's also a violation of Title IX and the Constitution and will invite costly lawsuits that the state will lose. I'm sure you can think of many more effective and helpful ways for Ohio to use that money.

As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community myself and also as a person with a partner who is non-binary, I am especially scared of the propaganda that is this bill. This bill's passage would be devastating to queer and also non-queer youth medically and personally as well as queer adults in sport. If this bill were to pass it is likely that the existence of trans adults in the future would decrease because without proper medical and gender-affirming care, they may not make it to adulthood.

Again, I strongly oppose the entirety of HB68 as it would ban scientifically researched, evidenced backed, gender-affirming medical care to transgender youth, therefore putting them at greater risks of mental health issues and suicidality. It would also infringe upon the right of all children and adults to play sports on teams of their affirmed gender due to fear-mongering that is not evidence backed. I ask that you please consider my testimony and vote no to HB68, Ohio's ban on gender-affirming care and transgender student athletes,

Thank you for your time. I'm happy to answer any questions.

"25 Organizations Join WSF Letter to NCAA Regarding Transgender Athlete Participation Policy."
Women's Sports Foundation, 22 Mar. 2022,
www.womenssportsfoundation.org/advocacy/25-organizations-join-wsf-letter-to-ncaa-regarding-transgender-athlete-participation-policy/.