

Representative Kim Koppelman, Chair
Representative Karen Karls, Vice Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
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HERO
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Tuesday March 16th 2021
I am writing against HB 1298

To the Senators of the Senate Judiciary Committee;

I strongly advise you to not pass House Bill 1298.

My name is Zander Mueller, I am writing as a student, a member of the club HERO, and as a member of the LGBTQ community myself. I have lived in North Dakota all my life. I want to be able to say that I am from North Dakota with pride, and not embarrassment. If this bill is to be passed it will force me to say that I am from North Dakota with such embarrassment because I will have to say that I am from a state that can not even allow transgender people to live here without them feeling like their existence is a burden.

This bill is harmful and extremely painful to the transgender community in North Dakota, and even more so for the trans youth in this state. For some transgender youth, sports and athletics are the only way for them to express themselves. If we force those people to play on the team that aligns with their birth sex other than their gender identity then they will only continue to struggle with their mental health. It is simply not fair to them that because they're something they can not control that they have to be punished for it. By forcing a transgender person on the team that identifies with their birth sex it will be nothing but a punishment for simply existing.

House Bill 1298 is nothing but an ignorant, sexist and bigotted opinion that has little to no evidence backing it up. The theory that transgender women or transgender athletes in general have an unfair advantage was debunked or proven as a myth. This bill is not trying to make sports more fair, it's just trying to legalize transphobia. There is already so much transphobia and homophobia in this state, and passing this bill it will just make this state even more dangerous for the trans community. Why does the trans community have to fight so hard, simply just to exist? Transgender people shouldn't have to worry about legislation invalidating their existence. Passing this bill will only make them more scared.

This bill has so much hate behind it. The outcome of HB 1298 is more harmful than you could imagine. It has been proven that transgender youth has a much higher rate of suicide than cisgender youth. If this bill goes any further that rate is just going to increase. The transgender community has lost and suffered so much already, it's not fair or humane to pass this bill knowing repercussions of

implementation. Why should the transgender community have to suffer because of the unwillingness of this state to simply educate itself? Transgender people are not a threat. Transgender people playing on the sports team that identifies with their gender identity is not a threat, and this state needs to stop treating them as one.

Transgender people are not going away, no matter how much you fight against them. They have every right to live in this state and to be who they are without fear. So again, I strongly advise you to not let this bill pass. Transgender people have already fought enough, it's time to give them a break and allow them to be who they are.

Thank you for listening; I am now open for questioning.

Zander R. L. Mueller