

TRANSATHLETE.COM

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Statement by Chris Mosier
Professional Athlete & Founder of Transathlete.com,
before the Senate Judiciary Committee
in opposition of House Bill 1298

Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to share my concerns with House Bill 1298 – I am contacting you today to ask you to oppose this bill, which targets one of the most vulnerable populations of youth and aims to exclude young people who are transgender from participation.

My name is Chris Mosier and I am a professional athlete and founder of Transathlete.com, the leading resource for policy on transgender people in sport. Transgender students participate in sports for the same reasons other young people do: to challenge themselves, improve their fitness, and be part of a team. Having the opportunity to participate in sports results in positive outcomes for all students - better grades, greater homework completion, higher educational and occupational aspirations, and improved self-esteem. Excluding trans students from participation deprives them of opportunities available to their peers and sends the message they are not worthy of a full and social life.

I know this first hand. I am a transgender man, but long before I understood and could tell others I am transgender, I grew up playing girls and women's sports. Sports was how I found my friends, my community, and my social life. Sport was an essential part of my upbringing and my life, teaching me about goal setting, communication, determination, perseverance, leadership, and supporting others. In high school, when I struggled with understanding my place in the world, sports quite literally saved my life. And my participation in sports as a high school student-athlete certainly shaped me into who I am today.

Policies for high school athletes should focus on inclusion and should keep the bigger picture in mind: while there are athletes who are very serious about their sports, high school athletics is not elite competition and it is not on the world stage. Therefore, the policies at the high school level should prioritize access and participation for all youth, regardless of how they identify, and should support their growth as students and people.

The best policies do this. In the eight years since I created transathlete.com, I have seen more state high school associations adopt policies that govern where transgender high school student-athletes can participate. North Dakota is among those states, where student athletes have been able to participate with their peers since at least 2015. When bills like HB 1298 pop up, as they have in the past year in a wave of anti-trans policymaking, we see that they are not linked to any clear problem in women's sports, or any real documented threat to women in sports; instead, they are linked to stereotypes and

myths about transgender people and driven by hate groups and lobbyists whose missions are to erase transgender people from public life.

The truth that no one supporting HB 1298 wants to face is this: no transgender high school student is transitioning for athletic dominance. Girls in sports are not losing scholarship opportunities. And despite the fear mongering and false narratives by politicians right now, transgender athletes are not a threat to women's sports. There are many very real threats to women's sports, like a lack of funding, lack of positive media coverage, a shortfall of opportunities for growth and development for women in sports, and on and on - but having transgender teammates is not an issue. That's why organizations like the Women's Sports Foundation, the National Women's Law Association, and Athlete Ally, as well as high-profile women in professional and Olympic and Paralympic sports are in support of having transgender women and girls as part of women's and girls' teams.

Let me clear about the damage this bill, and even this conversation will have: when government officials, lawyers and lobbyists publicly debate the validity and worth of our existence as transgender people, the worth of athletes – of people – like me, it sends a dangerous message to young people that there is no safe or supportive place for them in this world. It also sends a message to people who are not transgender that they can and should ignore the basic humanity of transgender North Dakotans.

Trans kids just want to play sports with their peers.

I urge you to send a clear message that hatred, transphobia, and targeted attacks on young people will not be tolerated in North Dakota. Please make your commitment to oppose House Bill 1298.

March 16, 2021

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Mosier', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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