

Letter of Opposition to HB 1298

Chairman Larson, Vice Chair Dwyer and Member of the Committee

My name is Dave Williams

I am here today in opposition to House Bill 1298. A bill aimed directly at my child ever having the opportunity to play school sports under their true identity. My child is not trying to rewrite women's rights, just play high school sports. To have to face my child and tell them that the North Dakota legislature feels they are unfit to be given equal rights as any other children because they are different has really set them back and made them wonder what happen to the kind state, they used to live in. No parent should ever have to try and explain that, ever.

This bill seems to have been sponsored and supported by those who feel that Transgender children are arbitrarily taking on sex identities of their choice and in turn infringing on the opportunities of the genders they identify as today. Having also two daughters that played sports, one even having a scholarship opportunity from it. I could see where someone who never took the time to research for themselves or as our family, had the opportunity to raise a Transgender child would be troubled by the outward appearance of this.

It really seems to come down to "Nurture vs Nature" as someone once said.

Nurture being that this is a choice, a lifestyle, a way to get attention, just be different.

Nature being that the spectrum of the human existence is created great enough to support that someone who is born one gender on the outside can discover that it does not fit the gender on the inside. That gender is not as cut and dry as we thought it was.

Having had the privilege of raising a Transgender child. I thought it important to try and explain our experience of how a Transgender youth's journey somewhat goes.

Imagine feeling like you are hiding behind a mask that everyone accepts and realizing something is wrong. You just do not identify or belong to whom you see in the mirror. Imagine the confusion, despair, and agony with having to come to a self-realization that this is a real problem, and you need to say and do something. You need help dealing with this. Is this real? Is this contrived? Think of the hardest thing you have ever had to try and explain to your family, now magnify it by a 100. It's no wonder the suicide rate is so high in Transgender youth.

Now imagine that you find the courage to bring this to the attention of your family who understandably has the view its Nurture and tells you to just get over it. And when you press it, says we do not accept it, you either fix yourself or find somewhere else to live. That this behavior will not be tolerated. Or maybe only some of the family such as a mom or dad begins to realize there is something more to it and the other does not. This often leads to unbearable shaming, persecution and even violence. But say by some miracle the family decides to at least investigate it. They begin to reach out to Doctors, Therapist, and Experts in this field to find out what to do. To their shock and surprise, the family is told that what their child is experiencing inside is as real as what the family sees on the outside. So, after what seems like an unreal amount of time testing, and all the expert's forming consensus, on every level, you ask your family to let you transition your outside to meet your inside. They take a very hard look at all the evidence and agree to support you to be your true self. Able to finally be open, honest, and authentic inside and out. This rarely happens. And sadly, a Transgender child is 50% more likely to do self-harm when part of the family does not support them.

Now imagine that even if you have made all those hurdles. You are confronted and attacked one day by the very state you live in, by leaders who you thought where there to make your life better. Who feel that they know what gender is, and do not need Medicine, Science, PhD's, or anyone else to tell them what is or isn't all the real facts. With the narrow opinion that if these transgender kids want to resist birth gender, do it in private. Just do not inconvenience us with it. We are going to discriminate against you and if you do not like it, then MOVE!

As a family, we and our daughters have come to see that our Transgender child is no threat to their birth or true gender. That they with all their heart want to live and honorably represent their true gender and are appalled when lawmakers treat them as some wave coming to ruin women or men's sports. Anyone transgender posing to find an unfair advantage is an enemy to them as well. Transgender youth are not POSERS. We find it horrendous that when a cis male or female athlete excels at their sport, they are hardworking, gifted people to be emulated. But when a Transgender athlete excels, they are cheaters and advantage seekers, ruining sports for everyone. Amazingly, Federal, State, even Olympic athletic boards have and continue to put endless hours and research into making the sports field fair and fun for everyone. Yet some lawmakers seem to think that all that is not good enough, they need to ruin it for some.

Is it not time to really look at each other as lawmakers and see these children should not be fodder for political rhetoric, votes, or advantage? As we all have witnessed in our lifetimes. history does not tend to favor states with laws of discrimination. That like so many other human issues as a country, that laws like this one have discriminated against, that are now being found to have been overreactions, unwarranted, racist, and bigoted. As history starts labelling past and present laws and lawmakers as racist and bigots, Will you be among them? And even worse, labelled, not for doing this to adults, but to children?

It is high time to say enough is enough. North Dakota is better than this.

Just let Kids Play, Free, Open, and Honorably!

My family asks you to look your children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews in the eye and ask yourself. What if one day this is one of them asking to be real, respected and accepted. And having to one day give account to them as to, "Why did you, Mom, Dad, Grandpa or Grandma, Aunt, or Uncle do this to us or allow it by not standing up for us".

Please don't just vote no, but hell no, on House Bill 1298!

Dave Williams