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Testimony to the House Committee on Education

NAME: Erin Woods

TITLE: Parent

EMAIL ADDRESS: ewoods999@gmail.com

BILL NUMBER: HB 2238; Fairness in Women's Sports Act

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Oral

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing today in opposition of bill HB 2238. I share my perspective simply as a parent. I am not a parent of trans children, but I can speak to the things children need to be healthy and happy.

They need to socialize with their peers. They need to try new activities and figure out what brings them joy and what they might be good at. And they need to be able to do these things in spaces where they feel comfortable and accepted for being themselves.

From Kindergarten on, both my son and daughter participated in all sorts of activities provided by their schools, from sports, to band, to newspaper, and more. They grew from each of those experiences, whether they stayed with the activity or moved on to something else.

They learned a tremendous amount from playing sports—commitment, self-discipline, teamwork, resilience. And I know a big part of that was because they were on teams where they felt a sense of belonging.

HB 2238 removes those opportunities from one very small minority group here in Kansas — trans children. They deserve the opportunity to learn and grow in comfortable, accepting spaces by being afforded the same experiences as my own children.

I'm aware of the swimmer who won an NCAA championship. But, I'm also aware that sports governing boards are learning from this rare instance and adjusting their rules as we learn more about the science of transitioning at different stages in life. I implore legislators to leave this role to those groups.

I'm also aware that Kansas has a governing board for sports and activities (KSHSAA) that already has rules in place for trans athletes. And as of last year, there was only one trans girl registered with KSHSAA. Because of privacy laws, we don't know who that girl is or where she lives in Kansas. But, we also don't know because she isn't making headlines for breaking records. She is just participating in a sport that brings her joy alongside her peers.

Please do not take away these opportunities from our already vulnerable trans youth. Can you even imagine what this bill must feel like to that one trans girl in Kansas? Or to be her parent?

This outright ban that extends from Kindergartners on up usurps the authority of KSHSAA and is completely unnecessary. It is a solution in search of a problem that does not exist in Kansas. Please focus on the real issues facing Kansas kids like mental health and fully funding special education.

Vote no on HB 2238 and stop what just feels like the vilification of a very small population of vulnerable trans kids.

Thank you,

Erin Woods
Leawood, KS