

Opponent Testimony of HB2238
For the Senate Education Committee
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Chair Baumgardner and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent written testimony on House Bill 2238.

I am a mother, a professor of mathematics teacher education, and an education researcher here in Kansas, and I am deeply troubled by HB 2238. This bill does not solve problems; it only creates them. Even worse, the problems it creates are born by vulnerable children.

As an education researcher, I know what the research says about trans children and the uphill battles they face in our society. They already have to constantly defend their own identity and existence. This is emotionally and mentally exhausting for them, and all too often leads to poor mental health outcomes, as we know from ample research across multiple fields. One of the spaces where trans kids can find acceptance and community--which are buffers against those poor mental health outcomes--are sports. This bill will rob them of that and exacerbate the challenges they already face.

However, I don't merely speak from my expertise as a researcher--I also know all of this from personal experience as my child is trans. We moved here in the middle of the pandemic and so my child already had additional challenges to face when making friends and finding their social group. This bill would bar my child from opportunities to make friends through sports. This bill would signal to other children and adults that my child is somehow inferior or tainted and shouldn't be allowed to do normal, healthy, community-building activities with their peers. This bill would legalize ostracizing my child and thousands like them that only want to have access to the same opportunities that others have.

As a woman and a researcher, I can say categorically that trans children are not a threat to cisgender women's participation in sports. If you are concerned about women's participation in sports, perhaps we should strengthen Title IX protections or increase funding for those activities.

HB 2238 is a terrible, vicious bill. It legalizes the ostracization of children who are already marginalized by our society. If you really care about children, you will oppose this bill. Thank you.