

Melissa Atchison

Private Citizen and Pastor

Opponent Testimony of HB 2238

For the Senate Committee on Education

March 6, 2023

Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Melissa Atchison, I live in Manhattan, in District 66. I am writing in opposition to HB 2238 which is obviously designed to discriminate against trans youth who play sports. I am the parent of a trans adult who played soccer in high school during years of dealing with gender and sexual identity challenges. Every teen is working at understanding their identity as a whole person, and sports are one of the best activities in which to learn how to be oneself in the context of community. Thankfully, our son was not excluded from playing soccer. I am grateful to live in a context where our child was accepted on a sports team that provided a healthy outlet for physicality and a positive experience of contributing to a shared goal.

HB 2238 essentially limits sports teams to cis-gendered children. The exclusion of trans children from sports is one more way of telling them their lives don't matter. For too long many of us have been hesitant to see that God made trans folk just the way they are, and we have no right to deny them the joy and learning opportunities provided by sports or any other activity. The high rate of suicidality among trans persons is evidence that rampant discrimination is harmful. If as a state we could agree that all persons, no matter their gender, benefit from the experiences of learning to work as a team, what a difference this could make for a future bright with equity and fairness!

Please oppose HB 2238 so that no one is left out.

Sincerely,

Pastor Melissa Atchison

Manhattan, Kansas