

Opponent Testimony of HB2238
For the Senate Education Committee
March 6, 2023
Julie Kedzie
Kansas Resident/Former Professional Athlete

Chair Baumgardner and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent written testimony on House Bill 2238.

I am a former professional combat sports athlete and current coach and as someone who has fought against discrimination against female athletes my entire life, I can honestly say the premise of this bill is false. It will NOT promote fairness in women's sports--or sports at all--and will only serve to create division and promote prejudice.

This bill is based on unfounded and exaggerated claims, stoked by prejudice purporting to be science. At the heart of this bill is deliberate misinformation, couched rhetoric about "protecting girls," intending to play upon ignorance and partisan media. There is no concrete evidence that a trans individual has a competitive advantage over a female athlete, and any attention placed on the smallest success of a trans person over female athletes in sports has been exaggerated for political agendas. I have personally trained and sparred with men, women, and people who identify as trans or nonbinary, and can tell you from own experience that my own performances were my own responsibility and that the person or opponent in front of me was an individual with their own particular strengths and weaknesses--not a gender. Also, we are talking about children. The idea of blaming a child for having a "competitive advantage" is a tenuous argument at best, as children themselves are by definition an entire population in the process of growth, both physically and mentally. To ban one segment of the population from participating with others is weakening the growth of all. In addition to this, how would you enforce this bill? Are you going to be funding "gender checks" by school officials? Teachers? How would you determine someone be suitable for that kind of role with your child? How would you ensure your children would remain safe from strangers/adults with power in such a potentially vulnerable situation?

If you are worried about their prospects as athletes, I urge you to look into expanding the budget for girls' sports to provide as many opportunities and are as encouraged as that of boys'. You might also look into expanding the budget of the science literacy programs to help combat this kind of misinformation campaign, and perhaps look into more funding for school counseling services so that they can extend to parents who need help if their child should happen to lose a game.

This bill does nothing to safeguard or promote fairness for girls in sports and it also sets a dangerous precedent to cause a great deal of harm for both trans and cis identifying children.