

## **Senate Education Committee**

Proponent Testimony – Fairness in Women’s Sports

Senator Renee Erickson

February 23, 2021

At one time in my life, I was a decent basketball player; enough so to be offered numerous athletic scholarships. Because of this, I was the first person in my family to graduate from college. If it hadn’t been for that scholarship, I may not have been able to go to college or, at least, would have been saddled with thousands of dollars of debt. But basketball gave me so much more, as sports do for all athletes. It taught me self-discipline, teamwork, gave me leadership opportunities, lifelong friends and kept me out of trouble. These opportunities are being threatened, which is why 20 states have introduced similar protections for girls.

Senate Bill 208 is a simple bill. Its sole purpose is to protect the opportunities that I had by ensuring that only biological females compete in girls’ sports because every female athlete deserves a fair playing field.

The definition of fair includes, “in accordance with the rules or standards; legitimate,” and “without cheating or trying to achieve an unjust advantage.” Allowing biological males to compete against females is the epitome of an unjust advantage. There are indisputable, scientifically proven hormonal, chromosomal and physiological advantages that males have over females which create an unequal playing field. If science and common sense are not enough, consider the following:

At the last Kansas High School state track meet in 2019, 50 boys clocked a time faster than the all-time record for girls in the 3200m.

KSHSAA sets different qualifying standards for the state swim meet for boys and girls.

This year alone, each of top 50 boys beat the longest standing record in girls swimming set in 1998.

These are just a few of the countless examples in Kansas. Records that girls have worked so hard to achieve are in jeopardy.

Every Saturday for the last few months, I watch my 5-year-old granddaughter, Paisley, play basketball at the Y. I'm not biased, but she's got game. She has the potential to be better than her Mimi ever was. It's hard to imagine that 35 years after I walked off the court for the last time that my granddaughter may not have the same opportunities. That's why I'm fighting to save girls sports.

In closing, Madam Chair, I urge committee members to do the right thing. Listen to the testimony of today's conferees.

Follow the science. Follow common sense. Support Fairness for Women. Support SB208.