

**February 13, 2023; 1:30 pm**  
House Committee on Education  
Rep. Adam Thomas, Chair

Joan and Jerry Gilson  
Parent/Grandparent/Olathe, KS citizen

**HB2238** – Creating the "fairness in women's sports" act to require that female student athletic teams only include members who are biologically female.

**Opponent, Written Only**

Chair Thomas and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Opponent testimony on HB2238.

As Olathe, Kansas residents, grandparents and parents of public school students, and strong supporters of our children, we are writing to ask that you strongly oppose HB 2238 and any move to institute state-wide laws that harm and restrict the rights of lesbian, gay, and transgendered students, children and adults. So-called "fairness in girls' sports rules" do not protect students; on the contrary, they further exacerbate the emotional pain and profound harm these children are already experiencing as a result of the wide-spread discrimination and bullying they face every day.

To offer further proof of harm, we must just call your attention to the disproportionate rate of actual suicide and thoughts of suicide that has been thoroughly documented in several studies, two of which are cited below (Toomey et al., 2018; Austin et al. 2022).

The numbers are shocking: 82% of transgender individuals have considered killing themselves, and 40% have attempted suicide, with suicidality highest among transgender youth. Researchers have determined through extensive analysis that this damage is most assuredly not a result of the gender identity, but rather a consequence of the relentlessly cruel bullying inflicted on these children and youth by an unforgiving, brutal culture.

As a state, Kansas holds the mission of protecting, encouraging, and promoting the whole, happy, successful lives of all residents, especially our children. So-called fairness in girls' sports rules deliberately undercut that mission and your responsibility to protect the rights and safety of all children.

Our own granddaughter is married to a trans woman; both young women hold responsible, highly paid positions in the telecommunications and space industries, respectively. They have been supported and encouraged by their community, their church, their families and their teachers; the result is that they are warm, generous young adults who make a substantial contribution to the economy and to the human community. This is in no small part thanks to their

families and to the support they received in their community. These are benefits which you are tasked with continuing to protect. Please allow this community to continue to be a safe place that protects some of the most vital, creative members of society, people who make a substantial economic contribution. And please protect the welcoming status of our community, a status that attracts strong industry, manufacturing and other engines of a thriving, vital economy. Thank you for serving on this committee, and thank you for taking time to read this testimony and taking our points into account when you cast your vote.

Sincerely,

Joan Gilson, PhD

Arthur Gilson

Austin, Ashley, Shelley L Craig , Sandra D'Souza , Lauren B McInroy. (2022). "Suicidality Among Transgender Youth: Elucidating the Role of Interpersonal Risk Factors ." NIH. National Library of Medicine. PubMed.  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32345113/> Accessed 2 Feb. 2023

Toomey, Russell B., Amy K. Syvertsen; Maura Shramko. (2018) "Transgender Adolescent Suicide Behavior." Pediatrics: Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.  
<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-4218> Accessed 2 Feb. 2023