

Dear Members of the Education Policy Committee:

I am writing as a social worker and mental health provider to express my opposition to HF 12, relating to education; restricting female sports team participation to the female sex.

My biggest concern with this piece of legislation is that This bill will allow *anyone* to challenge the sex of an individual participating in a female team and require that the young person undergo physical examination at the family's expense. Similar legislation in other states has led to humiliating and baseless claims against cisgender women and girls.

As the former Director of the PRIDE Institute, the nation's leader in providing substance use disorder services to the LGBTQI communities, I saw first hand the devastating effects that discrimination takes on our communities. None more severe or more poignant than that suffered by the transgender men, women and gender diverse people.

Discrimination against trans people has profound and far-reaching effects on their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. It manifests in various areas of life, including healthcare, employment, education, housing, and social relationships. This community is up to three times more likely to deal with a substance abuse disorder than the cisgender community.

The mental health effects include increased rates of stress, depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide. From 2018 to 2022, 48 anti-transgender laws were enacted in the U.S. across 19 different state governments. Researchers at the Trevor Project examined the relationship between these laws and suicide risk over this five-year time period, using national survey data collected from more than 61,000 transgender and nonbinary youth. Results concluded that, during this time period, anti-transgender laws significantly increased incidents of past-year suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth by as much as 72%.

I urge you to stop this bill from needlessly adding to death and destruction of innocent people.

James Stolz, LICSW, LADC

Esteemed Leaders of our Great State,

I write to you both as the parent of a transgender young adult and as the Pastor of a local church, where we have several transgender young people in our congregation, in Moorhead. Life is hard for transgender young people on this edge of Minnesota. Youth are keenly aware of the efforts in North Dakota to, at best, erase transgender people from public discourse and, at worst, to deny them the right to life. Most youth in my community have their first job in North Dakota, where transgender people have no legal rights of protection. This is true for my own offspring, who once had their name tag with pronouns ripped from their chest by a customer in their retail job. They considered going to college in ND, but chose MN schools because we are a transgender sanctuary state.

We do not need to do anything to make life harder for teenagers, especially transgendered teens. Research into the actual effects of having transgender athletes competing in gender segregated sports shows that there is no detrimental effect. Trans athletes do not have an unfair advantage. Competing with transgender athletes does not harm cis-gendered youth. This means that the result of HF 12 is only harm. There is no positive. And it would harm not just transgender athletes, but all transgender children, as we take away their sense of safety in this sanctuary state.

Please hold the line. Keep our sanctuary status. Protect our kids.

Rev. Michelle Webber (She/Her/Hers)

1583 34th Ave S, Moorhead, MN 56560

United in Love, A Just World for All

Hearing Testimony
Private Club and Youth Sports Associations

I am a coach and director for a private travel softball organization in MN that serves over 400 female athletes ages 10 to 18 years. The recent executive order signed by the President has provided a necessary restoration of the protections afforded to female athletes by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 (Title IX). This executive order, along with pending federal (H.R. 28, S.9) and state (H.F. 12, S.F. 916) legislation, represent a critical step forward in making these protections permanent.

However, private athletic organizations, and the athletic associations of our MN communities, will not be protected by these actions. These organizations and associations are not academic institutions. They are not funded by the State or Federal government. They do not operate under the jurisdiction of the Federal or State Departments of Education. Minnesota and the Federal government offer seemingly no protection for these female athletes, organizations, and associations.

The female athletes competing in private club athletic programs are dedicated, and strive to be the best in their sport. These young women play for the joy of competition and the chance to earn athletic scholarships. Private sports organizations, and community based athletic associations, offer the highest level of youth amateur play and the greatest opportunity to advance to collegiate athletics. These organizations participate in tournaments and showcase events where the majority of collegiate athletic recruiting takes place. My organization, as an example, will have more than 50 athletes sign Letter of Intent commitments to play NCAA I,II, and III, NJCAA, and NAIA softball in the fall of 2025.

Unfortunately, the young women of Minnesota, competing across all sports, have had to earn these types of scholarships while competing against biological males. While many females have found a way to achieve success, I fear that there are many females that have lost opportunities that they deserved. In addition, we have forced these pre-adolescent and adolescent females to rationalize the complexities of gender ideology. It is hard to answer the questions from a young athlete when they come to realize that their friend, teammate, or competitor is not the gender they thought they were. How is a coach supposed to tell them it is OK?

I am in full support of both H.F. 12 and S.F. 916. I only ask that the additional protection for all female athletes be considered.

HF 12 // TESTIMONY

Good afternoon! Thank you for allowing me to share today. My name is Kaia. To start, I'd like to give you a brief overview of my involvement in athletics. I was a 3-sport high school athlete, a 2-sport college athlete, a head girls basketball coach and an assistant athletic director at an area high school. Athletics is one of the things that has significantly shaped who I am today.

My athletic experience has shown me that boys and girls are different! If that wasn't true, Title IX wouldn't have been needed in the first place. Title IX gave girls the opportunity to have their own teams – like the boys had. Those who want to allow transgender athletes (biological males) to play in girls sports refuse to admit the serious consequences that come with this decision. I want to talk through a few of these consequences.

1. Limited Spots – Allowing transgender athletes (biological males) to compete in girls sports takes away spots on a team from biological girls. I worked so hard to earn a spot on each of the teams I played on and I can't imagine how devastated I would have been had a transgender athlete (biological male) taken my spot.
2. The Locker Room – it's a very vulnerable space. From changing, to showering, etc. it's a space where girls should feel protected. Allowing transgender athletes (biological males) access to a girls' locker room is putting girls in a very vulnerable situation.
3. Championships – winning a conference, section or state championship is something that requires an incredible amount of work. Girls sacrifice so much to win championships. I can't imagine how crushing it would be for an all girls team to lose to a team with transgender athletes (biological males) who are bigger, stronger, etc. It's biologically unfair.
4. Injuries – There are physical differences between boys and girls. If there wasn't the MSHSL wouldn't have boys basketball and girls basketball or boys hockey and girls

hockey. Why would we think that allowing transgender athletes (biological males) to play against girls is physically fair or safe?!

Finally, I urge each of you to think seriously about what is at stake here – think of your daughters, grand daughters, nieces, etc. They deserve to be protected. Girls have fought so hard to get to where we are now. If we don't protect girls' sports now, we will be un-doing the progress we have fought so hard for.

Feb. 18, 2025

Chair Peggy Bennett and Education Policy Committee

Sports to me growing up, were a way to not only get my competitive edge out, but also, to bond with my girl friends. We sweat together, cried together, laughed together, and supported each other through the ups and downs. We celebrated victories with the highest of emotions, and were there for each other through the toughest losses. We became family on the field, court, etc, and truly were a family like none other. This was all because we were all girls - going through the same things, puberty, boy drama, figuring out what it meant to be a woman. This could not be done if we allowed boys on our team. The camaraderie and familial bond would not be there if we had boys in our sports teams. The whole feel would not be the same. There is true growth we get to share with each other as girls, that would be totally disrupted if a boy was on the team. Not to mention that if a boy was on the team, there would not be the level of trust we had or true competition. The matter of the fact is - men and women are DIFFERENT and have different skills and abilities. There is a reason that for DECADES that we have been separated in sports - because we are different. There is no need to change what is already working. The same sports are available for both men and women so why do you feel the need to disrupt what has already been working for years. Let the girls be girls and the boys be boys - we ALL know what that entails.

*Thank you,
Shae Jaster*

Lino Lakes

My name is Olivia Doig and I am a senior in high school. I am a multi-sport athlete who has competed on the high school, club, and regional level. I have lettered in three sports: golf, cross country, and alpine skiing, throughout my high school career. Speaking from my experience in these sports and on behalf of the many other girls who also play competitive sports, I was appalled at the rejection of the Executive Order by the MN State High School League on the allowance of transgender women in female sports, which is why I am writing to you today.

Allowing biological males to compete in female sports is incredibly insensitive to female athletes worldwide. No matter what gender you identify with, you should be competing with those who share your same biological gender. Without this barrier, safety, privacy, and hindrance to success is allowed. Simply put, there is no denying that males are biologically larger, stronger, and faster than females. This compromises the safety and health of all women in contact sports. Allowing transgender men in women's sports also creates a lack of privacy when it comes to changing rooms, restrooms, locker rooms, and many other locations in which there is a reason for separation. I can not imagine the feelings of discomfort of having a male changing next to me in a locker room. That is beyond inappropriate for any age. Lastly, allowing biological males in female sports gives them an unfair advantage and takes away the opportunity of females in that sport. Over 900 titles and awards nationally have been given out to transgender women in sports. That is 900 biological women who have been robbed of their hard work and efforts. Let's just say, it is obvious as to why there isn't a movement to have transgender men compete in male sports.

Golf is a sport I have been playing since age 8, and I confidently say that the immense biological difference between males and females plays a large role in why there is a separation between the two biological genders. In the game of golf, men and women tee from different distances, because biologically and statistically speaking, men have more power and speed allowing them to hit the ball farther, so these tee distance differences allow for an even playing field. While I would love to be able to hit my ball equally as far as a male my age, there is simply a very low probability of that happening. However, this difference in power, speed, and ball distance does not hinder my accomplishments or rank in golf because there is a separation of gender in competition. It is this very reason why my opportunity to qualify for state two years running, to be captain of my team, and to qualify for All-Conference has happened. Without the separation of genders through the very elementary understanding of biological males and females, an accomplishment or opportunity of that kind could have been robbed from me. I would be incredibly distraught if a male golfer who identified as a female took a spot from me away at my section or state tournaments. While this has not happened to me, this has, and will continue to happen to female athletes if this is not stopped.

It is disgusting to me to think that something of this matter would ever be allowed. This does not defeat women by creating a different class for them to compete in, in fact, it allows them a fair playing field for them to shine as individual athletes. The incredible accomplishments many girls have earned throughout the years are the very reasons why I am writing this letter. Quite frankly, I'm surprised that a 17-year-old even has to send in a

letter to adults on the basics of human biology and common sense, but I would like to stand up for the young women who may not have a voice, have been violated, or whose future success is at risk here.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I hope you will pass the MN State bill in order to protect girls sports in the State of MN.