

House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs

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HB23-1098 Women's Rights In Athletics

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Carrie Boudette  For  themselves	As a mother of 2 daughters in sports I support this bills. Men and women are built differently and should never have to go against each other in competition.  Thank you
Heather Van Benthem  For  themselves	I wholeheartedly support HB23-1098. Biology teaches us that there are two sexes, male and female. They are determined by our chromosomes, which cannot be changed. Recent incursions into female sports by biological males has caused irreparable damage to the girls by removing their own safe competing space and by, in many cases, rendering their years of training all for naught as they go up against males, whose bodies are inherently different than those of females. It is also damaging to the boys. A message, no matter how "innocently" intended, that a boy cannot win on a boy's team and therefore ought to compete as a girl is emasculating and mentally and emotionally damaging to the boy. All of this should go without saying, but sadly, we have gotten to a point where switching sexes is somehow deemed MORE healthy -- when clearly it is not. HB23-1098 is an important step in re-establishing boundaries in at least one area of our society. Thank you for furthering this bill.
Joshua Pollock  Against  themselves	I am writing to urge you to oppose HB23-1098 because it does not protect women's rights but rather discriminates against a whole class of students (those who are transgender, non-binary, and gender expansive). It would take away the opportunities for physical and mental health as well as belonging, leadership and identity formation that participating in sports can offer. Transgender people participate in sports for the same reasons everyone else does, and no evidence supports the claim that excluding some from participating in school sponsored sports protects women or youth. Even the bill's sponsors cannot cite an example in Colorado of when transgender athletes have posed a problem. If the bill were intended to protect the rights of some student athletes, it would be ill-conceived, as it seeks to solve a problem that is imagined only, but in fact it is disingenuous-- it is mean-spirited, politically-motivated discrimination against a vulnerable population masquerading as compassion. Please vote against this bill.

<p>Ash Abbott Against themselves</p>	<p>Hello, my name is Ash and I'm a gender non-conforming and masculine presenting student-athlete in Boulder, Colorado. I am strongly opposed to legislation changing to force teams to divide based on biological sex because it would both be harmful to the players and sports and their environment as a whole as well as not beneficial for anyone As a non-conforming player, I'm given the chance and opportunity to play on teams and with people that I couldn't if only based on my assigned sex at birth. This is something that, as my community supports me and is accepting of whichever team I chose to play on, allows me to be comfortable while on the fields and enjoy the games. But if this new legislation passes, not only would that option for me, other people on my team and who I know on other teams and a large section of athletes as a whole would be forced into an uncomfortable and even unsafe position. This legislation, despite being pushed as something to help people be safer on the field and on the team would forcefully out a vast number of athletes, and while I know my team would likely be accepting, others would not be. By forcing people to play, based off of their assigned gender at birth our lives, safety and mental health are all neglected and pushed away. Social views and acceptance of trans and gender non-conforming people already make a number of things in daily life dangerous, challenging, or unsafe and I, along with others, have been able to find a safe space in my team where I have the accessibility to play on a team where I feel comfortable without having to worry of how people will react negatively to my gender orientation. By enforcing same-sex teams, not only are students' safety placed at risk, but the environment and atmosphere drastically changed to be more rigid and separate as players are forced to be outed and the lines between teams grow larger. For the continued safety, acceptance, support, and freedom of any and all athletes to play on the teams they wish, will you vote no on and oppose HB23-1098?</p>
<p>Erika Devlin For themselves</p>	<p>Hello House State, Civic, Military, &amp; Veterans Affairs Committee:</p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity to express my full support for bill HB23-1098 (Women's Rights In Athletics [Frizell, Bradley, Pelton B.]</p> <p>I firmly believe that only biological females should compete against other biological females in competitive sports! My daughter was a top lacrosse player growing up and earned a D1 scholarship to play in college.</p> <p>As part of her training, she played "box lacrosse" in high school against male players that were in junior high( three to four years younger). Needless to say, my daughter's team and the other girl's teams got crushed! Luckily, box lacrosse requires a lot of protective gear and pads</p>

	<p>because the girls could have sustained major injuries and trust me, these young boys were holding back in the games. On the occasion the younger male athletes got mad that my daughter's team was playing well, they would show their superior speed &amp; strength. The power of their contact left girl athletes slammed to the ground with pretty severe bruising.</p> <p>I can't even fathom what would have happened if my daughter had to play against males her age, or boys that identified as female.</p> <p>Lacrosse is a tough contact sport and biological girls could not compete with players that were not biological females.</p> <p>I wholeheartedly believe my daughter would not have had the opportunity to play D1 in college if she had to compete against non-biological females.</p> <p>This is about protecting biological females and their rights in sports. Please support this bill!</p> <p>Respectfully, Erika Devlin</p>
<p>Megan Burch Against themselves</p>	<p>My name is Megan Burch, I am a resident of HD-39, and I am opposed to this legislation, "Women's Rights in Athletics." I am one of Rep. Bradley's constituents, and I want you to know that this bill does NOT represent our community or our interests. It is discouraging to be represented by an individual that plays into hateful anti-LGTBQ+ rhetoric, especially when living in close proximity to a mass shooting that targeted LGTBQ+ people less than three months ago.</p> <p>This bill guised as "women's rights" is really about bigotry and hatred against the trans community. The implication of this legislation is that there is some "agenda" of trans children taking over sports and that including them would "create harm" to other children. This is absolutely false and firmly rooted in bigotry.</p>

	<p>Legislation like this is fueled by a national agenda of hatred and bigotry against the LGBTQ+ community, and has dire consequences, as we know from the Club Q shooting and the additional nationwide threats against LGBTQ+ community spaces. While the rhetoric seems to be effective in garnering political points with extremists and donations for anti-LGBTQ+ legislators, it fuels the hatred and bigotry that leads to violence.</p> <p>Additionally, legislation like this targeting the trans community has consequences that are widespread. For example, we just saw an attempt to track the menstruation of female athletes in Florida, a consequence that was a result of Florida’s own anti-trans sports bills. That effort was struck down.</p> <p>Unfortunately, sponsoring this legislation is not the first time that Rep. Bradley has protested the right of the LGBTQ+ community to gather in community and have fun. In 2022, she attended a protest against a drag show in Highlands Ranch, and additionally sent a formal letter of opposition to the event as a candidate running for HD-39 to the Highlands Ranch Community Association. Rep. Frizell, another sponsor of this legislation, also signed off on that letter.</p> <p>Please see this legislation for what it really is, the use of the government to attack trans people and restrict the right of trans children to play, have fun, and be in community with other children.</p> <p>Please vote no on this legislation. Please vote no and firmly reject extremism in Colorado. A full 11-0 vote will demonstrate a strong stance against hatred and bigotry in Colorado.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
<p>Allyson Stebbins Against themselves</p>	<p>This bill is an insult to women's rights by reducing women to their reproductive organs. Excluding trans women from women's sports is not protecting women. If anything, such laws endanger women regardless of their sex assigned at birth. Laws such as this one often subject women (both cis and trans) to invasive genital examinations and/or blood testing.</p> <p>The premise of this bill is also insulting to women since it is predicated on the assumption that women are weak, whereas actual science shows there is far more variation among women and among men than there is between</p>

	<p>the average woman and the average man. There are also countless ways in which people differ in athletic ability due to physical traits (e.g., height, weight, body proportions), and we do separate people based on these characteristics.</p> <p>Finally, this bill fails to consider trans men in sports. Such men, likely thought of as "women" by the writers and sponsors of the bill, often take testosterone. Their assigned sex at birth would have them to participate in women's/girl's sports, but these teams are typically subject to testosterone limits. Thus this ban effectively prevents trans men from participating in competitive sports altogether.</p> <p>Not only is this bill poorly reasoned and written, it endangers the same women it purports to protect. It is a blatant attempt to gatekeeper womanhood, attack trans women, and earn "culture war" points from right wing extremists. Politicians need to mind their own genitals.</p>
<p>Megan Tobin Against themselves</p>	<p>Apologies, I wanted to testify remotely but because of the delays, I am unable to stay on the call past 3:45 MT</p> <p>My testimony:</p> <p>As a Coloradan, mom, athlete and sports coach, I am disappointed at the presentation of this bill for several reasons, oppose it, and urge you to vote no. The headline grabbing bill title is erroneous. This bill will not protect women in sports. In fact, it will harm women and girls sports and put both those designated female at birth and those not designated female at birth at risk.</p> <p>This bill actually violates Title IX, which guarantees EQUAL educational opportunities (including sporting) to all, including our LGBTQIA students and athletes. And most of us could not agree more that Title IX has grown the opportunities for women in sport. Sport is a human right, and one our trans students deserve. Trans athletes have been able to compete at the highest levels, the Olympics, for decades. And in over 21 years, only two trans athletes become Olympians and only one competed.</p> <p>In states where anti trans sports bills have passed, such as Idaho and Florida, the enforcement of these bills has led to period reporting for teen female athletes, as well as genital inspection of a young female athlete, who was born female at birth, simply because a parent challenged whether she was actually female because she was good at her sport. We have a</p>

	<p>hard enough time keeping young women and girls in sport and this will only lead to more leaving sports.</p> <p>And if these aspects don't seem disturbing enough, as a taxpayer, I am disappointed that we are wasting time and resources on a bill that is not an issue. Utah passed such a bill despite the governor's veto. In his letter vetoing the bill, the governor pointed out not only how punitive it was against the trans community, but how much resource was wasted to legislate the issue when there were TWO known trans youth athletes in the state, and only one was a trans female. In Michigan, out of 180,000 youth athletes, only 4 were trans and one trans female competing. Before this bill leaves committee, I would ask if this is an actual issue Coloradans are facing and if they wish to override federal law to regulate women's sports.</p>
<p>Cyndi Szymanski Against themselves</p>	<p>I am writing to urge you to oppose HB23-1098 because it does not protect women's rights but rather discriminates against a whole class of students (those who are transgender, non-binary, and gender expansive) and would take away the opportunities for physical and mental health as well as belonging that participating in sports can offer. Transgender people participate in sports for the same reasons everyone else does, and no evidence supports the claim that excluding some from participating in school sponsored sports protects women or youth. Though it claims to address an imagined threat to fairness or equality, this politically-motivated bill discriminates against vulnerable Coloradans, which is its real purpose and motivation. Please vote against this ill-conceived and disingenuous bill.</p>
<p>Amelia Federico Against themselves</p>	<p>Hello and good afternoon members of the committee. My name is Amelia Federico I currently attend MSU Denver and have lived in Denver my whole life.</p> <p>I am here today to tell you a story. I attended a large public school during my freshman year in high school. The transition between middle and high school was difficult for me. I had a hard time making friends in such a big school. During the first couple weeks of school, I am grateful to have been invited to try out for the freshman volleyball team. I tried out for the team, and I made the team. I was over the moon. I had already started making friends and felt like I belonged in an atmosphere that was so overwhelming like high school. Slowly, I started making friends with the people on the junior variety teams who were upperclassmen. When I had a question about a class or how to navigate a situation, I had them to talk to. Having a built-in support system made me feel prepared for my job as a student. Throughout the season I made some of my best friends, some I even talk to today. Being a part of the volleyball team was more than just a sport to me, it was a community, that was supportive, where I had the opportunity to</p>

	<p>feel comfortable in my own skin as a new student. Being a part of the team also kept me on track academically. If I wanted to play in that week's game, I had to be on top of my schoolwork. I don't know where I would be without the love and support of this team, I am truly grateful for them.</p> <p>I am more than just a sports player though. I am also Latino, queer, religious, nonbinary, and most importantly, a human. When I first read this bill I was sick to my stomach. Fear instantly sat in as I pieced together the harmful reality that this bill would instate. I thought of my peers, trans women, and nonbinary folks across the state and felt deeply saddened by the fact this bill is tearing away their rights as a human, and that they might not get to experience all of the joy and fulfillment that playing sports has to offer them. This is why I am urging you to vote NO on HB23-1098. Trans women and nonbinary individuals are humans. And so am I. Look at me. I am a human too.</p>
<p>Amie Baca-Oehlert Against Colorado Education Association</p>	<p>The Colorado Education Association strongly opposes HB 23-1098 and asks the House State, Civic, Military &amp; Veteran Affairs Committee to please vote no on this bill.</p> <p>Proactive inclusion of all genders, ethnicities, sexualities and lifestyles is critical to the mental health and happiness of our students and educators. In 2022, CEA surveyed Colorado educators to get a better grasp on the education landscape for LGBTQ+ educators and students. The report found that the majority of LGBTQ+ educators work in school environments where they feel neither safe nor supported.</p> <p>The bill requires that any interscholastic, intramural, or club athletic team, sport, or athletic event sponsored by a public school or district, an activities association, or a state supported institution of higher education only allow student to participate in extracurricular sport team if their expressed sex matches their biological sex at birth. HB 23-1098 is a solution in search of a problem and will undoubtedly exacerbate LGBTQ+ students and staff feeling unsafe at school. This is an inappropriate intrusion into an individual student's privacy and will do irreparable harm to all trans people in Colorado.</p> <p>In order for our students and educators to thrive, it's critical that pro-active inclusion policies are enacted. According to GLSEN's National School Climate Survey, students with an inclusive curriculum have better academic and mental health outcomes, and are less likely to miss school. No matter our color, genders, or background, the Colorado Education Association wants our students and our educators to be respected and safe in their</p>

	<p>schools and districts. Each and every one of us has an integral role to play in re-imagining and rebuilding inclusive and safe schools for our students, educators and communities. Please stand up for Colorado LGBTQ+ students and educators and vote no on HB 23-1098.</p>
<p>Dawn Fritz Against Colorado Parent Teacher Association</p>	<p>Colorado PTA opposes House Bill 1098.</p> <p>LGBTQ youth who experience rejection based upon their sexual orientation or gender identity face significant health risks including much higher risks of suicide and depression. The benefits of participating in sports benefits social, physical, and mental health of our students.</p> <p>Further, PTA supports laws that recognize and protect our LGBTQ+ students, families, and staff from discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This does the opposite; It singles out transgender and nonbinary students for discrimination based on their gender identity and gender expression.</p> <p>Myths and stereotypes should not drive public policy. Broad exclusion of a group of people harms from athletics harms everyone.</p> <p>PTA opposes House Bill 1098 because it would have detrimental effects on the physical and mental health of our children and youth.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>