

Opponent Testimony of HB2238
For the Senate Education Committee
March 6, 2023
Alexandra Shoup
Topeka Resident and Mother

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

My name is Alexandra Shoup. I have been living in Kansas since 2013. I have met many different people while working in the service industry in restaurants, as a Registered Behavior Technician at Family Service and Guidance Center, and as a Child Protection Specialist with The Department for Children and Families. The purpose of this bill seems so insensitive and an act to continue bigotry and division between the American people.

To begin, I am a white woman. I have always been a white woman. I have never felt as though I was living in the wrong body and that I would be happier as a man. I have always felt comfortable in my own skin and chose to live my life pursuing happiness. The Declaration of Independence says that We as American people have the "certain unalienable Rights to Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." If I had felt that I was in the wrong body, I would've wanted to do whatever I needed in order to make myself feel like I was in the right skin so that I could continue to pursue happiness.

Does it really make a difference to YOU what someone else identifies as? How does it impact your life even a little bit? Who are you to stop someone from living their best, happiest life? Have you ever thought about the amount of people who would end up self-harming or committing suicide because they're not happy in their own skin? The Trevor Project "estimates that at least one LGBTQ youth between the ages of 13–24 attempts suicide every 45 seconds in the U.S." Is that not alarming to you?! Imagine if those youth were able to live their lives without the scrutiny of society always following them? Imagine if those youth were able to play on the sports team they wanted?

For me, sports was always my escape from home. I played sports throughout my entire life up until I went to college in 2013. My sports teams were my family when my biological family couldn't be there for me. Being a part of a community was huge for me and playing sports gave me the community, support, and friendship that I needed at a young age. This bill will take away that community and support that transgender youth may need. And that's not saying that EVERY transgender youth wants to play sports but for those that do, they deserve to be able to play with the team of the gender they identify with. They deserve the opportunity to be happy no matter what gender they identify with.

I recently read a study by the National Institutes of Health that says, "The American Academy of Plastic Surgeons in the National Library of medicine, in which it states that in 27 study groups totaling 7,928 transgender patients, statistically 1% of those individuals presented regret after gender-affirming surgeries." The media has focused on a very SMALL number of transgender individuals who have succeeded in athletics which has resulted in the misinformation this bill represents. This bill seems to want to protect cis-gender athletes from unfair advantages in sports but that's not what's happening in reality. The proponents of this bill clearly don't know the facts from the misinformation because if you looked up any peer reviewed journal about transgender people, you would find that they just want to live their lives pursuing happiness. Isn't that what we all want? Who are you to deny someone's opportunity to find happiness because you've been misinformed?