



March 2026

To: House State, Civic, Military & Veterans Affairs Committee  
Re: AAUW OPPOSES HB26-1083--Protect Female Sports Act

Dear Committee Members,

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is one of the oldest women's organizations in the country, empowering women since 1881. The mission of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. More than 700 community leaders are members of AAUW branches around Colorado.

One of our priorities is to pursue policies that advance full access to civil rights for a diverse society. We believe HB1083 would be a step backward in recognizing and accepting those who have chosen gender-affirming care.

For these reasons, AAUW of Colorado strongly opposes House Bill 1083 and requests your NO vote in committee.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Su Ryden".

**Su Ryden**  
**AAUW Colorado Advocacy-Director**

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*American Association of University Women--AAUW is a top-rated 501(c)3 charitable organization whose mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.*

**House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs**

**03/09/2026 01:30 PM**

**HB26-1083 Protect Female Sports Act**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Shaela Smith Against themselves	<p>the text of this bill reveals that whoever wrote it is listening to exclusively one side on this issue. there is a whole lot of research coming out revealing the biology of transgender individuals. an overwhelming amount of the non-biased information of shows that trans women who have been on HRT for a year or so do not hold actual advantages, and are in-fact disadvantaged by things like worse bone density, less hemoglobins that make their cardio worse, risk of blood clots, and often a lack of prior training due to stigmatization. sports organizations and our government do not care about things that are actually advantageous like height, wingspan, weight, etc because dealing with these things is part of competitive sports and the right can't successfully kick off a hate campaign against tall basketball players. the campaign against transgender people will not stop after they kick them out of sports. bills like this lay the groundwork to pass bathroom bills, legal recognition, healthcare, and eventually the right to even socially transition.</p> <p>for the people who absolutely don't care about any trans people and hope that we will all die, i propose this. do you want to be required to submit a genetic sample to compete in sports at a high school or even middle school levels? do you want to win a game, and then be accused of secretly being a perverted man because you did too good or did too many arm exercises? do you want your children to be subject to genital inspections by officials at every competitive event? hell, do you even know what your chromosomes are? who has had their chromosomes tested? i havent, I might at some point in the future find out i have an extra Y, or any number of intersex conditions. so might you. when that happens, you will no longer be "a woman" in the eyes of the people who propose these bills.</p>

	<p>allowing something like this to pass in colorado will cause me to feel a great shame about my identity as a coloradan. don't let it happen here.</p>
<p>Diana Hurst  For  themselves</p>	<p>No brainer.  Keep men out of women's sports!</p>
<p>Jennie Adler  Against  themselves</p>	<p>Dear members of the committee,</p> <p>Our names are Jennie Adler and Chase Smith, and we are asking you to vote NO on House Bill 1083. We have significant concerns regarding the implementation and consequences of this bill. One of our primary concerns is the method that will be used in order to verify a participant's sex. Policies that require children to confirm their sex introduce ethical and safety concerns. The inspection of a minor's genitalia completed by an adult creates risk for pushing personal boundaries as well as sexual abuse or assault. As mental health care providers, we have seen firsthand how damaging sexual trauma in childhood can be to a person's livelihood. Unfortunately, there have also been accounts of predatory behavior by individuals in positions of authority within youth athletics. Sports should be an opportunity to foster confidence, teamwork, and belonging. Not an environment that enforces children to be put in a position where their bodies are subject to scrutiny.</p> <p>We are also concerned that this bill will disrupt current sports teams that are comprised of girls, whether transgender or not, and how deciding to exclude members on the basis of sex tears teams and friendships apart. These transgender and cisgender girls or women have created strong bonds, trust, and identities as teammates, regardless of biological sex. Removing team members based on biological sex would fracture established bonds and damage the stability and confidence that sports provide. Excluding individuals from pro-social activities such as sports based on their gender and identity can have severe consequences for their mental health and well-being. Belonging, peer-relationships, and participation in</p>

	<p>extracurricular activities are protective factors for youth. By passing this bill, children will be forced to go into isolation and social withdrawal, and the risks for anxiety and depression will increase.</p> <p>For these reasons, we believe House Bill 1083 will be incredibly damaging for the future generation of Colorado as well as the LGBTQ+ community.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
<p>sibyl gardner For themselves</p>	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Sibyl Gardner and the reason I support this bill is my experience as a high school athlete. I played a number of sports, but lacrosse was my favorite. Sports were an important part of my youth. While I was a very fast runner, I was 5' tall and weighed 92 pounds. I would have been seriously injured had I been forced to play against a biological male. From the time they are in the womb, males are biologically different (both their brains and their musculature) from girls. It is not safe or fair for girls to have to compete against boys.</p>
<p>Emily Cadwell For themselves</p>	<p>In honor of International Women's Day, I am submitting written testimony in favor of Colorado's HB26-1083-Protect Female Sports Act. My name is Emily Cadwell and I am a Colorado resident and mother of two daughters. I support this bill because it protects fairness and the opportunity for female athletes in Colorado. In 1972, the United States Congress recognized it was vital to separate sports by biological sex to ensure fairness for females in athletics. This created fair opportunities to compete, earn scholarships and develop their athletic potential. These protections exist because of the biological differences between males and females which affect overall strength, heart capacity, lung capacity, muscle fibers, speed and endurance in sports. This bill is not about exclusion, but preserving the opportunities the generations of women fought to create. I respectfully urge the committee to support HB26-1083 and protect fair competition for female athletes in Colorado. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
<p>Admir Petrovic</p>	<p>To whole it may be in concern,</p>

<p>Against themselves</p>	<p>I am very much against men/boys in women's sports. I will just write one word. Disadvantage! Biological men have every advantage over a woman and should not be allowed to in their sports. It's taken over 50 years for women to have their spaces and should not be interfered by a MAN. Thank you</p>
<p>JEANY RUSH  For themselves</p>	<p>TO: HOUSE STATE, CIVIC, MILITARY, &amp; VETERANS AFFAIRS                  RE: HB26-1083 PROTECT FEMALE SPORTS ACT                  SPONSOR: SCOTT BOTTOMS                  FROM: JEANY RUSH, COLORADO CONSTITUENT 3-9-26                  VOTE: YES COMMON SENSE NEEDS TO PREVAIL                  Folks:                  WHY DO WE NEED THIS BILL?!?!?                  5Getting hit by a male transitioning to female rugby player similar being hit by a bus   Toronto Sun                  "The U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) recently banned transgender athletes from competing in women's sports, becoming the latest institution to take such action following President Donald Trump's Executive Order (EO) 14201, titled "Keeping Men Out."                  "National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) took similar action the day after the president's EO 14201, issued on February 5, 2025, prohibiting athletes assigned male at birth from participating in women's sports competitions, a reversal from prior NCAA policy                  "World Rugby ultimately concluded that "there is currently no basis with which safety and fairness can be assured to biologically female rugby players should they encounter contact situations with players whose biological male advantages persist to a large degree," and that after puberty, "the lowering of testosterone removes only a small proportion of the documented biological differences." Hence, World Rugby concluded that biological men should not compete in women's rugby. (World Rugby Transgender Women Guidelines 2020.)                  Dr. Chad Thomas Carlson, M.D., FACSM Expert Declaration:                  CONCERNING INJURY RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH TRANSGENDER</p>

	<p>⌘PARTICIPATION IN FEMALE ATHELETICS: CONCLUSION</p> <p>Since the average male athlete is larger and exerts greater power than the average female athlete in similar sports, male-female collisions will produce greater energy at impact, and impart greater risk of injury to a female, than would occur in most female-female collisions. ⌘ well-documented physiological testing and elite performance differences in speed and strength, as well as differences in lean muscle mass that exist across all age ranges, the conclusions of this paper can apply to a certain extent before, as well as during, and after puberty,,,,, males who have undergone hormone therapy in transition toward a female body type ⌘..retain musculoskeletal ⌘legacy⌘ advantages in muscle girth, strength, and size.⌘ THEY SAID IT BETTER THAN I COULD!</p>
<p>Lorette Diversey For themselves</p>	<p>I urge you to use your common sense and put your politics aside by voting 'YES' to HB26-1083.</p> <p>Sport categories are based on sex at birth, not gender. Title IX...Girls' sports are specific for girls at birth, females, to give them their space to thrive and for safety from maturing boys. So, allowing biological boys, even if taking female hormones, changes the changes the definition of it being 'girls' sport. Girls sports are for biological girls. And girls do not have to have their enjoyment in sport become a medical and social experiment.</p> <p>Biological girls should have equal opportunity within the sport they train. Equal opportunity is taken away from biological girls as studies show that hormone therapy reduces but does not eliminate the advantages of biological boys.</p> <p>I offer 3 studies for reference:</p> <p>Harper et al., 2021 ⌘" British Journal of Sports Medicine (systematic review), trans, "even after 36 months, strength, lean body mass, and muscle area remain above cisgender women⌘™s averages."</p> <p>Klaver et al., 2017 ⌘" Meta⌘'analysis on body composition with cross⌘'sex hormones; "but some residual advantage can remain in certain strength tasks."</p>

	<p>Klaver et al., 2017 " Meta-analysis on body composition with cross-sex hormones; "structural advantages from male puberty (e.g., frame size, baseline muscle) are only partially reversed."</p> <p>More research has to be done to confirm biological boys, taking female hormones to counter the male hormones the male body is created to make, do not have an unfair advantage.</p> <p>Policies should err on the protection of girls until more data is obtained and scrutinized.</p> <p>Vote to support HB26-1083</p>
<p>Erin Brantley For themselves</p>	<p>My name is Erin Brantley, and I am a Colorado resident and parent. I am writing in support of HB26-1083 because it protects fairness and opportunity for female athletes in Colorado. In 1972, the United States Congress recognized it was vital to separate sports by biological sex to ensure fairness for females in athletics. This created fair opportunities to compete, earn scholarships and develop their athletic potential. These protections exist because of the biological differences between males and females which affect overall strength, heart capacity, lung capacity, muscle fibers, speed and endurance in sports. This bill is not about exclusion, it is about preserving the opportunities that generations of women fought to create. For many young women, sports are not just games—they are opportunities for scholarships, leadership development, and personal growth. Preserving fair competition ensures those opportunities remain available for future generations. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support HB26-1083 and protect fair competition for female athletes in Colorado. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
<p>Thomas Ballard For themselves</p>	<p>Biological males should never compete in the same category as a biological female! A biological male that wants to be a female still has the physical attributes of a male! For that reason, they should never compete as a female</p>
<p>Ella Yeager For</p>	<p>I am a resident of Denver, Colorado as well as a mother to a young female athlete. I am writing today to express my strong support for</p>

<p>themselves</p>	<p>policies that prioritize the protection of girls'™ sports and girls' spaces in Colorado.</p> <p>I believe that maintaining fair competition, ensuring safety, and protecting privacy is fundamental to the well-being and success of female students in our state.</p> <p>Ensuring that these categories remain designated is not about exclusion; it is about preserving the opportunities and safe environments that have been established specifically for girls and women. I urge the members of this body to prioritize these protections to ensure a level playing field and a secure environment for all.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and for your service to our community.</p>
<p>Jessica Richards</p> <p>Against themselves</p>	<p>Since 2023, we've seen many bills like this before from around the country. Their only purpose is to pressure lawmakers into denying that trans women are women, and everywhere they've passed (sometimes in states without transgender athletes), floods of bills have followed to strip trans women of our rights.</p> <p>If the people who created bills like this actually cared about women's sports, they would propose laws that fully funded and staffed girls' sports programs in public schools, and they would vocally advocate for similar improvements in collegiate and professional women's sports. Those are the sports changes that would actually help women and girls.</p>
<p>Kathy Lockhart</p> <p>For themselves</p>	<p>My name is Kathy Lockhart, and I live in Jefferson County. I am a former collegiate athlete and a four year starter at Western Colorado University. I grew up in a coaching family, was a three sport letter winner in high school, and served as a team captain in both high school and college. Sports shaped who I am today. They taught me discipline, teamwork, accountability, and how to compete and lead " qualities that directly contributed to my success academically, professionally, and in my community. As a business leader, I have hired hundreds of people, and I consistently see that those with</p>

	<p>athletic or competitive backgrounds bring stronger resilience and teamwork.</p> <p>One memory from college stands out. Our women’s basketball team once played a men’s intramural team “ made up of players who had not made the men’s roster. Despite our skill and experience, their size, speed, and strength created an undeniable advantage. That experience reminds me why separating male and female competition exists in the first place.</p> <p>Fairness in sports is not only about physical differences; it is also about the opportunities sports provide for young women “ confidence, identity, leadership, and a safe space to grow. Every time a male is allowed to compete in a female category, a young woman loses a place she earned. I am seeing girls step away from sports because they fear losing opportunities. I am seeing athletes pushed off podiums and losing chances for scholarships. These are young women who deserve every chance to compete, grow, and succeed.</p> <p>I support this bill because the opportunities that shaped my life should remain available to the next generation. I am a step grandmother to two young female athletes, with another on the way, and I refuse to sit by while their future opportunities are diminished.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my perspective and for allowing me to share my experience as a former collegiate athlete and lifelong supporter of women’s sports.</p>
<p>Sarah Westdorp For themselves</p>	<p>I stand in support of HB26-1083 to protect female sports in CO. There is no question to the biological difference between a man and a woman. Regardless of their sexual preference, men and women should only be allowed to play sports in their gender specific sports; men with men and women with women. Allowing men to play in women’s sports is a slap in the face to everything women have fought for to gain the freedom to have their own sporting events. I urge you to vote yes for HB26-1083.</p>
<p>Steve McKenna For Grandparents4Kids</p>	<p>We can protect children with gender confusion without punishing girls by allowing boys to compete in girls' sports. Grandparents4Kids supports this bill. PLEASE VOTE YES!</p>
<p>Kristin Hood</p>	<p>Re: Support for House Bill 26-1083 “ Protect Female Sports Act</p>

<p>For themselves</p>	<p>Dear Members of the House State, Civic, Military, &amp; Veterans Affairs Committee,</p> <p>My name is Kristin, and I am a resident of Denver, Colorado. I am writing to strongly support HB26-1083, the Protect Female Sports Act.</p> <p>As someone who values fairness, equal opportunity, and the integrity of women’s and girls’ athletics, I believe this bill is essential. Biological differences in strength, speed, and physiology often give males an advantage in sports, which can undermine competition and safety when competing against females. Title IX was created in 1972 to ensure equitable opportunities for women in sports, and separating teams by biological sex has been key to that goal for decades.</p> <p>HB26-1083 simply requires clear designation of teams based on biological sex and protects schools from penalties for maintaining female-only teams. It doesn’t eliminate coed options or prevent anyone from participating—it ensures girls and women have fair, protected spaces to compete, build confidence, and achieve. Without this, we risk eroding the progress made in women’s sports and discouraging female participation.</p> <p>I have a daughter who loves sports, how am I supposed to tell her she has to compete against a boy twice her size, put her safety at risk and her confidence when it’s clear there is an unfair advantage for the boys.</p> <p>I urge the committee to advance HB26-1083. Thank you for your service and for considering the voices of Coloradans who care deeply about protecting female athletes.</p> <p>Sincerely, Kristin Hood</p>
<p>Kristin de Windt For themselves</p>	<p>My name is Kristin Dewitt and I have three daughters and live in Denver. I have watched all three girls have to compete against boys in sports such as soccer volleyball, and change in the same locker room. Has boys for volleyball at school. I am tired of my kids, feeling scared, threatened, confused, and downright sad, knowing that they have to compete against a superior boy I am completely against boys</p>

	<p>and girls sports and I will be the mom who shows up in that locker room and stands there and make sure that this boy doesn't get to come in to the same room as my daughters or the same bathroom as my daughters or on the field, our girls will now sit on the field on the courts every time a boy shows up to play in our sports because it is unfair, unjust, and is dangerous. We are done with the craziness we want back to reality boys or boys and girls or girls. Thanks.</p>
<p>Lisa Eddy For themselves</p>	<p>Protect Girls' sports! As a former collegiate women's basketball player and girls' basketball coach, there is zero room for any male in a female sport. There are two genders only. Any male that chooses to act female has a mental illness. No male should be allowed in any female sport period.</p>
<p>Katherine Colvin For themselves</p>	<p>My name is Katherine Colvin, and I am a Colorado resident. I am writing IN SUPPORT OF HB26-1083 because it maintains fairness for all athletes in Colorado. In 1972, the US Congress recognized that it was vital to separate sports by biological sex. These biological differences are scientific facts. I respectfully urge the committee to vote in favor of HB 26-1083. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
<p>Kara Gresslin For themselves</p>	<p>To Whom It May Concern -</p> <p>My name is Kara Gresslin, and I am testifying this afternoon in support of HB26-1083, Protect Female Sports Act.</p> <p>As a mother of both sons and daughters, it is my STRONG belief that sports and other activities that are largely measured on physical strength, stamina, speed, etc. be competitive with the same biological sex. To be clear, biological boys, males and men should compete against other biological boys, males and men...and vice versa for females, girls and women. This type of competition and play encourages and awards achievement and improvement in a way that is appropriate based on the biological FACTS as they relate to the differences between male and female - differences that become more obvious and pronounced with age.</p> <p>The current 'trend' of allowing biological males to compete against females in sports where their physical advantage is clear, researched and proven is a disgrace to our men/boys and a discouragement to our women/girls. A male that gets satisfaction and recognition for out-performing a female, when he is built with a physical advantage</p>

	<p>(ex: more muscle mass, overall larger skeletal structure, larger hearts, greater lung capacity), is shameful. At the same time, for a female to train, practice and physically prepare to be competitive in a sport...only to have a male step onto the playing field and use his God-given advantages to surpass her, is discouraging, disheartening and not in the 'spirit' of good competition. If a biological man/boy wants to win, by all means, train, practice and strive for that goal...but don't claim to be a woman/girl so he can win more easily...that's just as much 'cheating' as using PEDs (Performance Enhancing Drugs).</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration, ~Kara Gresslin~</p>
Jayleen Ballard For themselves	<p>This bill is not a democrat or a republican issue. It's a common sense issue. Girls should not have to compete against boys or have to deal with boys and dressing in front of them in locker rooms</p>

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the committee. My name is Olivia Widman, and I am an intern at Cobalt Advocates and a second-year law student at the University of Denver, Sturm College of Law. I am here to ask for your no vote on HB 26-1083, concerning protecting female sports.

I grew up playing soccer for nearly a decade, and the most important lesson I learned was that sports are about teamwork and belonging. HB 26-1083 moves us in the opposite direction. It excludes students and invites scrutiny of young people who simply want to play with their peers. I spent most of my childhood on a soccer field. Week after week, the lesson was simple: teams succeed when everyone belongs.

This bill has been introduced as a guise to protect women and girls from being harmed by transgender women and girls both physically and scholastically. But that is not reality. The bill treats sex as simple and obvious, when biology and medicine are not that simple. It ignores the realities of hormone therapy, intersex athletes, and other medical conditions that do not fit neatly into a binary category.

The bill also contains a contradiction. It allows girls to join boys' teams when no girls' team exists. That means the bill assumes boys' teams will exist first, and girls will need exceptions to participate. If the goal is protecting girls from boys in sports, how does placing girls on boys' teams accomplish that?

Supporters say this bill is about protecting women and girls. But the real-world effect is exclusion and scrutiny of students who simply want to play sports with their classmates. The reality is that people get injured playing sports every day, and that is okay. But by allowing this bill to pass, we injure the children and young adults in our community by excluding those who don't fit into these rigid definitions of what it means to be male or female. We also open our kids up to investigations on whether they are the same sex they present to the world. We have already seen instances where children are under attack by other children, senators, and even the President because they want to play sports but present differently.

Every person deserves a chance to play a sport. They offer many positive lessons and foster a community of inclusivity, which our marginalized community needs more than ever. Sports should teach young people teamwork, resilience, and belonging. HB 26-1083 teaches something very different. It teaches some students that they do not belong at all. For that reason, I respectfully ask you to vote no.

**TO: HOUSE STATE CIVIC MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**RE: HB26- 1083 Concerning Protecting Female Sports**  
**SPONSOR: REP. SCOTT BOTTOMS**  
**FROM: Jody M Nickerson 3/9/2026**  
**VOTE: YES**

Chair and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of **House Bill 26-1083, the Protect Women's and Girls' Sports Act.**

Having a large scale of involvement in sports growing up, I feel it this bill provides fairness and opportunity for female athletes that I never thought we would be having this conversation but have been forced to due to the overreaching legislation that has passed in the State of Colorado. There is a definite need to protect and give equal access to sports that women have fought so hard for that their rights are being chiseled away. Whether you want to see the truth, there is a significant difference between males and females that some here in this capital are misconstruing and confusing biological science.

House Bill 1083 simply reinforces that structure by requiring school athletic teams to be designated as male, female, or co-ed, and by ensuring that female teams remain reserved for biological females. This helps maintain fair competition and protects the opportunities that generations of women have worked to achieve.

The bill also protects schools from being punished simply for maintaining separate teams for girls.

Importantly, the bill still allows co-ed sports and includes protections for individuals with diagnosed disorders of sex development under federal disability law.

At its core, this legislation is about fairness, safety, and equal opportunity. It ensures that female athletes can compete on a level playing field and continue to pursue athletic achievements, including scholarships and recognition for their hard work.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support House Bill 1083.

Thank you for your time and consideration

**TESTIMONY ON [HB26-1083](#),  
PROTECT FEMALE SPORTS ACT**

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to advocate for our children and youth today. My name is Dawn Fritz, and I am Colorado PTA's Director of Legislative Engagement. I am proud to represent our nation's oldest and largest child advocacy association. Our mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Colorado PTA Opposes House Bill 1083

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 bill does the opposite. It singles out transgender and nonbinary students for discrimination based on their gender identity and gender expression. Transgender students are children who deserve the same dignity, respect, and opportunity to participate in school life as every other child.

PTA has long believed that schools should be places where every child feels safe, supported, and able to participate fully in the life of their school community. Participation in school and community activities — including athletics — helps students build confidence, develop friendships, and experience the joy of belonging. These experiences support students' physical, social, and emotional development and strengthen school communities.

When students feel that they belong, all children benefit.

PTA believes that all children deserve dignity, respect, and the opportunity to be included in school communities. Policies that single out or exclude students based on their identity create barriers to belonging and participation. For students who already face higher levels of bullying, isolation, and mental health challenges, those barriers can be especially harmful.

Colorado PTA supports policies that foster safe, inclusive learning environments where all students can thrive. Good policy strengthens school communities and benefits all children by ensuring every student feels valued, respected, and able to participate. Our children are watching how adults respond to questions of fairness, inclusion, and belonging. The choices we make today shape whether young people feel valued and supported in their schools.

For these reasons, Colorado PTA respectfully asks the committee to vote no on House Bill 26-1083.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Colorado's children and youth.

Dear Members of the State, Civic, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee,

My name is Heather Gonzales and I am a resident of Castle Rock Colorado. Thank you for the opportunity to hear this testimony regarding House Bill 26-1083.

As a parent of a trans athlete, one of the few in the state, I have witnessed first hand how important it is for a student (both cis and trans) to feel a sense of belonging within their school community. Activities like sports fosters feelings of inclusion, purpose, normalcy, confidence and self-worth. For trans students in particular these are feelings that can otherwise be diminished or erased, especially considering the climate in which trans people are living right now.

My daughter has played sports since the fourth grade and is now a senior in high school. Without sports, her high school career would have looked and felt very different for her. The court is the one place that allowed her to feel like everyone else, it gave her a sense of normalcy and freedom she sadly has not had the opportunity to experience elsewhere. It has encouraged her to maintain a high GPA, attend school regularly and strive to be a role model to others on and off the court.

There were never issues with her coaches, her teammates or her opponents. Not one time in a decade did anyone question if she belonged or should be allowed to play. This new witch hunt is a manufactured issue that hasn't been problematic until this became a culture war. Imagine being a high school kid and all you hear and read is that you and "your kind" are the sole reason for many ailments of the country. Imagine carrying the weight of all the hate on your shoulders, daily. For years. Imagine trying to be erased. Legislated out of existence. Debated. Doxxed. Hated. And imagine being brave enough and strong enough to still step on a court knowing how the world feels about you because that is the place that keeps you healthy, sane and happy.

Please don't take that away.

Sports is the only place my daughter has the opportunity to freely be who she really is. She is an equal with all the other girls when she steps on that court. She can forget, for 60 minutes, that the world is trying to erase her. She can forget that she has never had a boyfriend, never been asked to a dance or never had a first date. She gets to leave all those things she's been robbed of off the court for an hour. Anyone who thinks a child would choose this life, choose all this loss, just so they can play on the girls team to dominate or gain access with intent to do something nefarious, has never sat down and talked to a trans athlete.

Or at least not spoken to one who isn't sponsored by anti-trans companies or groups. They already don't "belong" in the world as it currently exists. She could never play on a boys team because simply stated, she's not a boy. And a separate team would exist of exactly one player, my daughter.

She's been out and playing in the same program for 10 years, and in that 10 years not one person who is anti-trans has taken the time to speak to either she or myself. No one has tried to learn our story, about her or my family. Instead they would rather make up their own narrative, because if they took the time to get to know us, they may actually have to change their mind. They may find empathy and they may learn something new. But of course that doesn't work in this culture war.

It's funny to hear people who are so vehemently against trans kids playing in sports who've actually never stepped foot in a locker room or gym. The girls don't change in front of each other, they certainly don't shower or do anything deemed private. The locker room is used for hugs, high fives, tears and team building. The only thing she does in the locker room is go to the bathroom (in a stall), stare at herself in the mirror like every other high school girl, gossip a bit about the opposing team and make memories that will last a lifetime.

Nothing nefarious happens there. I can assure you, the trans boogeyman does not exist within those walls. The boogeyman lies in the falsehoods that have somehow been shaped as truth against a population that is 0.44% of high school athletes. In our case, there were no roster spots "taken" as our school doesn't cut anyone who wants to play. There are no scholarships being taken from cis girls in colleges. There are no injuries above and beyond what happens during any regular game as those false incidents are bought and paid for by the anti-trans machine too.

According to national data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 26 percent of transgender high school students report attempting suicide in the past year, compared with about 5 percent of their cisgender peers. Experts consistently emphasize that this disparity is not because of a student's identity, but because of stigma, exclusion, and lack of supportive environments. Inclusive school communities are widely recognized as a critical protective factor for student mental health. My daughter did not become a statistic BECAUSE of her being allowed to participate in sports. Please ensure other trans athletes are afforded the opportunity to escape becoming a statistic too.

Colorado has a long-standing commitment to protecting students from discrimination through laws such as the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act, which recognizes gender identity as a protected class. Supporting inclusive environments in our schools reflects Colorado's values of fairness, respect, and opportunity for every student.

At its heart, this issue is about whether all Colorado students will have the opportunity to feel safe, supported, and connected to their school community.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to vote no on House Bill 26-1083.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the people of Colorado.

Heather Gonzales