



Oral PROPONENT testimony for HB 2238 AN ACT concerning education; relating to student athletes; creating the fairness in women's sports act; restricting participation on women's teams to female students; providing a cause of action for violations of the act.

To: Madam Chair Senator Baumgardner and Committee Members

From: Lucrecia Nold, Policy Specialist, Kansas Catholic Conference

Date: March 6, 2023

Madam Chair Baumgardner and members of the Committee,

My name is Lucrecia Nold, and I serve as the Public Policy Specialist for the Kansas Catholic Conference, representing the Catholic Bishops of Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a PROPONENT to bill HB 2238.

First and foremost, the Catholic Church teaches and invites us to love, respect and show compassion to all people. This includes people who do not share or embrace our view of the gift and beauty of human sexuality. All are welcome. As God created us male and female, we recognize the complementarity of both sexes. What one sex has, the other fills up and vice versa. This is a great gift that we know from Sacred Scripture and from our lived experience as human beings.

Pope Francis has repeatedly communicated the dangers of what the world calls “gender ideology.” Certainly, no one can accuse the Holy Father of being anything but a teacher of compassion. Here is part of what the Catholic Church teaches about sports and gender.

“In the context of the modern world, sport is perhaps the most striking example of the unity of body and soul. ...neglecting the unity of body and soul results in an attitude that either entirely disregards the body or fosters a worldly materialism. Hence, all the dimensions have to be taken into account in order to understand what actually constitutes the human being.”¹

Put another way, the Catholic Church recognizes that fairness in women’s sports is not only a gender ideology issue but also a social justice issue. It is an issue of dignity for the human person.

It is essential for us to recognize our God given difference, throughout all aspects of life. In this case, through our life of sports.

We must maintain an equal and fair playing field for all athletes. This is where the topic at hand also becomes a social justice issue. Gender ideology within sports creates a safety issue for athletes. Gender ideology does not promote fair play or ensure justice, particularly when it comes to biological female athletes.

¹ Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life, *Giving the Best of Yourself: A Document on the Christian Perspective on Sport and the Human Person* (2018) at <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/06/01/180601b.html> (accessed on Oct. 6, 2020)

It is a fact that biological males are stronger than biological females, it's the way God created us. It is part of the beauty of the human person. When biological males are allowed to compete with biological females, safety and justice becomes an issue.

Anyone who understands sports knows that coaches play the best players. If that player is a biological male, identifying as a female, it creates an unfair disadvantage for the biological female player. She is either on the bench or gets less playing time. This is not fair, safe, or just for the woman. This scenario also threatens to strip away her dignity.

The Catholic Church teaches that all people deserve love and compassion, no matter their personal experiences or sexual identity. Support of fairness in women's sports—where women compete only against other women-- is not a contradiction of this teaching.

The Kansas Catholic Church stands in support of HB 2238.

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