

My name is Zoe Hutchins, I'm a senior athlete, and I compete in soccer and track.

Athletics have been a huge part of my life for as long as I can remember. I've had many great opportunities to compete at a very high level including the state, regional, and national track meets.

For me and other female athletes, the opportunities that athletics provide are priceless to our personal growth and experiences. Unfortunately, over the past several years, these opportunities have been taken away by biological males who have been allowed to compete in the female category. I have personally seen this take place and have watched as my teammates and friends have had their hard work rendered useless by a boy.

There are clear biological differences between men and women. On average, males are taller, stronger, have greater muscle mass, bone density, lung capacity, wingspan, and out pace females in nearly every physical marker.

At the Indoor track and field championships this year, a biological male took the pole vault state title away from a girl. A girl that had submitted herself to years of dedication and training just to win that title. My own friend and teammate also had to compete against this biological male and was demoted on the podium as a result. In my teammates words, this experience was "upsetting", "discouraging", and before she vaulted she knew she "had no chance of beating a boy".

It is extremely regressive of our state to allow this and to take these opportunities away from our girls.

Beyond having a fair and level competition, this bill is about keeping our women safe. Recently a friend of mine was going to use the locker room at the gym when she saw a man walk in before her. She obviously didn't want to use the same locker room as a man so instead she was forced to wait outside her own locker room while he was inside. Later, she realized that this man is a registered sex offender. So not only are we opening the door for very uncomfortable situations, we are also making it easier for women to become victims in spaces that are as intimate as locker rooms. All a man has to say is that he identifies as a woman and he is allowed into women's spaces.

It is the responsibility of our elected officials to protect every young person and athlete in our state and do what's best for them. Allowing boys into girls' spaces is a failure of that duty. It is not promoting fairness or equality—it is actively harming our girls.

So, I ask you to think about our girls and please pass this bill. Thank you for your time.