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LD 2239

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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

I write to you as a person who has researched issues related to gender identity to oppose LD2239. I have no family member or close friend who has an atypical gender identity, but I have been moved both research I've done, and the struggles of acquaintances and colleagues whose gender identity have not matched their birth designation.

The idea of gender identity being separate from physical manifestation was a difficult concept for me to grasp for many years. Several factors made me see the issue in different light and gave me the gift of compassion towards those who experience its effects.

1) A colleague of mine who was a trans woman committed suicide after facing the harsh reactions of society. I have felt guilty because at the time I did not understand or accept her. To this day it I feel that I was not the colleague I should have been.

2) I was asked in my work to research how to create rules for name and gender changes on official documents. I looked at standards across the country. I came across a record of live birth form used at hospitals and saw that for sex there were far more than "male" and "female." The medical field has know for years that sexual identity is not necessarily straight forward.

3) I saw the transition of volunteer I worked with at a large event that takes place every few years. She was intelligent, hard working, but reserved in the extreme so I did not get to know her well. The last year I met this person, he had come out as a man. He was cheerful, warm, and immediately invited me to socialize. I was so moved by this transformation, so see someone become his true self was a joy, and solidified my changing attitude toward transgendered people.

4) There have been many articles published over the last few years of how gender expression on the genetic level is very complex. It is a physical fact that expression does not always match appearance. Here is one from the NIH:

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11771763/>

To force young people into bathrooms that do not match their identity is to put them in danger, either by humiliation, physical attack, or depression and self harm.

As for sports, the number of trans students is so small, will letting them compete with their identity so deeply affect the cisgendered students? I think not.

Please reject this bill, it will only harm vulnerable minority, without providing protection to the majority.