

## **TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY MEGAN BURKE**

(2-time NCAA champion runner at, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill,  
American Record holder, and college Track and Cross-Country athlete)

### **North Carolina State Legislature**

**Tuesday, April 18, 2023**

Dear North Carolina Lawmakers,

Thank you for your time & considering a bill that would protect girls and women's sports in the state of North Carolina.

As a former NCAA champion, American Record holder, and Track & Cross-Country athlete at the University of North Carolina, I know what it takes to compete at a high level. I also know firsthand the many benefits sports can provide to young women, and how sports can shape the woman you become.

Because of Title IX and the hard-earned efforts of women before me, I was able to compete in many sports growing up and earn a full scholarship to college to run Track & Cross Country. Now, as the mother of two young girls, I am concerned about the future of women's sports. Because male-bodied athletes are increasingly competing in women's sports, female athletes are losing scholarship spots, podium spots, and worst of all, the chance to even be on the team in the first place. I gained confidence from competing on a level playing field and winning. Was I among the last generation of women to have this opportunity? I hope not.

Thanks to actions from the Biden Administration and the spineless leaders within sports associations like the NCAA, biological males identifying as women are allowed to join and compete on women's teams all across the country. Everyone is familiar with Lia Thomas, the trans-identifying swimmer at University of Pennsylvania. But Thomas is just one example. Increasingly, trans athletes are [dominating women's sports at all levels](#).

[Most Americans \(68%\)](#) oppose the participation of trans athletes in women's sports, and for good reason. Science confirms what we already know: Male-bodied athletes have a physical advantage. According to a study published in the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery, men have stronger bones, greater muscle mass and strength, and better aerobic capacity, on average, than women. Another important difference is hormones. On average, young men from the onset of puberty secrete 20 times more testosterone than females, resulting in circulating testosterone levels that are 15 times greater in healthy young men than in similar-age women, according to a study published in The Endocrine Review.

In fact, women athletes have long been prohibited from taking testosterone, because it is widely understood to be a performance-enhancing hormone. When I won at the NCAA level, as soon as I crossed the finish line, I was followed to the bathroom, where a monitor (always female) would *watch me* deliver a urine sample. This drug testing wasn't a pleasant after-race activity, but I didn't mind, because it kept the sport fair.

This raises the question about hormone therapy: Can trans athletes adjust their hormone levels to a point where fair competition is possible?. The current NCAA ruling is that a biological male identifying as trans only has to do hormone therapy for a year before competing in women's sports. But this does not level the playing field. One hormone level is not the measure of a woman, and hormone therapy doesn't eliminate the male advantage. The British Journal of Sports Medicine studied the effect of gender-affirming hormones and found that even after two years of taking feminizing hormones, male trans-identifying athletes were still 12% faster than biological females in a 1.5-mile race.

If anyone understands the razor thin margins between winning or losing a track and field race...it is me. Often, a race comes down to 1/10 of a second. I cannot fathom having to race against someone that had a 12% speed advantage over me at the starting line. It is cheating and it is unfair.

Of course, we all want every child to have the best opportunities in life, and many people want to change the world of sports in the name of inclusivity. But here is the thing, competitive sports aren't inclusive. No one has the right to be an NCAA athlete. No one has a right to be a champion. You earn it

through an insane amount of hard work, grit and passion. In the name of inclusion, we are now excluding girls and women and robbing them of the wonderful opportunities that sports provide.

I gained so much from sports and my time competing at The University of North Carolina, and sadly my two little girls may not be afforded the same opportunities. It's time for states like North Carolina to step up and pass legislation such as this bill to help save Women's sports. Otherwise before we know it every female record will be broken by biological males identifying as women, and we won't be able to get them back.

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