

Testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 208: Fairness in Women's Sports Act

Submitted by: Callie Hicks, Greeley, Kansas; former University of Kansas track athlete

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Chairman Barker and other members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee,

My name is Callie Hicks and I live in Greeley, Kansas. I speak in support of Bill No. 208 and the Fairness in Women's Sports Act as a Kansas woman with demonstrated experience in high school and D1 college athletics. I am very thankful for the opportunity to share my testimony with you.

As an athlete for Lawrence Free State High School, I was part of a state championship-winning gymnastics team in 2014 and earned back-to-back pole vault 6A state championships in 2015 and 2016. As a senior, I was recognized as Free State's Scholar Athlete of the Year and was awarded the Merlin Gish scholarship at the Shawnee Mission North Relays in the eye of my parents and many other talented athletes. Through these events, I was blessed to experience the fruits of my labors alongside many coaches and mentors who helped make it possible. Even in my teenage years, I thrived off the lifestyle of hard work and determination and dearly loved the community of friends that high school sports gave me. My dedication to athletics required will-power; a keen sense of time-management; and the ability to communicate with teachers, coaches, and trainers.

These lessons propelled me to succeed further at the D1 level for the University of Kansas, later competing in two Big-XII conference championships in 2018 and 2019. As a college athlete, I was able to live out my dream of working with one of the most talented pole vault coaches in the nation while receiving a stellar education from KU's School of Business. I was surrounded by athletic excellence, often getting to train and receive mentorship from past NCAA and Olympic champions. Ultimately, one of the greatest gifts from my achievement in sports was the opportunity to coach aspiring young women in track and gymnastics clinics. Seeing their motivation and drive reminds me that the pursuit of excellence in sport carries over to all aspects of a woman's life.

I am here today because I want fairness in sport for my colleagues and teammates who continue to compete collegiately, and also for these young girls just beginning their athletic journeys and developing their competitive spirits. I want to protect their future endeavors as high school state champions and their dreams of D1 competition. It is at the core of my being that I believe and know to be true – biological men have an unfair advantage competing against biological women in women's sports. To say otherwise denies overwhelming data in sports statistics as well as science.

Data from the current college indoor track season confirms men are stronger and faster than women across all events. Just in the pole vault event alone, the average height cleared by the top five D1 men's pole vaulters exceeds the average height cleared by the top five women by more than 4 feet (SOURCE: TFRRS). The average height for women is 14 feet 7 inches, and the men's is 18 feet 10 inches. Letting biological males compete as women in women's sports is the demise of a level-playing field for women – who deserve just as fair a chance to compete for 1st place as men do.

Now that I have transitioned to post-competitive life, I believe it is my duty and purpose to stand and defend what women's and girls' sports were created to be and should be -- competition for biological women and girls. I hope the State of Kansas will protect fairness of competition by passing SB 208 and continue to provide women and girls the same opportunities it provided me in high school and college.

Thank you.