

2/23/21

Written Testimony by Rev. Rachael Pryor in Opposition to SB 208

Senate Education Committee, Sen. Molly Baumgardner, Chair

Mme. Chair, Members of the Committee:

I am the Rev. Rachael Pryor, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and a resident of Lindsborg, Kansas. I have three young children, ages 10, 7, and 15 months. If at any time my children identify with a gender other than the biological agenda assigned at their birth, I will fully welcome and love them as unique individuals, the way I believe God loves and welcomes all of creation.

The Bible says God created humans in God's own image, male AND female. It doesn't say, male OR female. God's image includes all of our human concept of gender, and more. In Christ, our risen savior and the best way we can understand God within our limited human means, St. Paul proclaims in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

The same advances of science that even in the past decade have enabled so many families to conceive and have children where this would once have been impossible, have also taught us that we have an extremely limited understanding of gender, biological sex, chromosomes, hormones -- how they are created, and how they are expressed and connected.

Children are born every day with organs and chromosomes representing "both" genders. Are these children not beloved of God, made in God's image? Are we asking that every single athlete undergo extensive chromosomal and hormonal testing? Visible genitalia are merely one indicator of biological sex, and are not always definitive. Why can't we simply trust our children and young adults, to tell us who they are?

This concern represents a tiny fraction of school athletes. This legislation falsely positions cisgender athletes as potential victims of a theoretical harm, when the evidence clearly demonstrates that it is rather transgender youth are at significantly higher risk of harm, assault, emotional abuse, and suicide, than their cisgender peers.

I call upon this legislature to truly protect all children and youth of Kansas equally, instead of disguising blatant transgender discrimination by pretending to offer protection by to those who need it least. Please vote no on SB 208.

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