



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 7882 • MADISON, WI 53707-7882

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 4, 2023

Contact: Sen. Mark Spreitzer, 608-266-2253

Sen. Tim Carpenter, (608) 266-8535

Rep. Greta Neubauer, (608) 266-0634

Rep. Lee Snodgrass, (608) 266-3070

Members of the Wisconsin Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus Testify Against Bills Attacking Transgender and Nonbinary Youth

MADISON – Today, legislative Republicans in the State Assembly held public hearings on three bills that would harm transgender and nonbinary youth. Members of the Wisconsin Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus submitted the attached testimony in opposition to AB 377, AB 378, and AB 465, and released the following statement:

“Although these bills will not become law in our state, their reintroduction alone is harmful and dangerous. We call on our Republican colleagues to stop giving these bills an official platform and to not take any further action on them. We stand with transgender and nonbinary youth in Wisconsin. To the transgender and nonbinary people of our state: you are seen, you are loved, and you belong here.”

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To: Assembly Committee on Education

From: Senator Mark Spreitzer, Senator Tim Carpenter, Representative Greta Neubauer, and Representative Lee Snodgrass

RE: Assembly Bill 377

Date: October 4, 2023

Chair Kitchens and committee members:

As members of the Wisconsin Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus, we are submitting written testimony today in opposition to Assembly Bill 377. We ask that our testimony be shared with all members of the committee, and be entered into the committee record for this bill.

This bill discriminates against transgender students in Wisconsin by denying transgender girls the opportunity to participate in girls' sports. All young people should have the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored athletics consistent with their gender identity.

Categorical exclusion of transgender girls from participating in school sports alongside their peers is harmful because it singles out transgender youth and denies them the opportunities provided by organized sports and being part of a team. Studies have shown that participating in youth sports can lead to lifelong, positive impacts on a child's physical, mental, emotional, and social health. In addition to helping students stay fit and build physical activity into their lives, youth sports allow students to develop deep and lasting friendships with their peers. Athletes learn life skills such as empathy, leadership, perseverance, and teamwork that will help them throughout the rest of their lives. We know that access to youth sports is crucially important to every student's success.

Athletes across our state already compete under existing policies that ensure a level playing field for all students, and banning transgender girls from participating in sports consistent with their gender identity undermines those efforts. The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) already has policies related to the participation of transgender youth in sports, and is committed to ensuring that transgender youth have equal access to compete in sports.

This bill also likely violates federal law. In 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that federal bans on sex discrimination must be read to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity. This means that where the federal government bans discrimination on the basis of sex, it also bans discrimination against transgender people. The U.S. Department of Education is currently



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engaged in federal rulemaking to make clear that categorical, one-size-fits-all restrictions on transgender students participating in organized school athletics violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.





Assembly Bill 377 was previously introduced in the 2021-2022 legislative session as 2021 Assembly Bill 196. Last session, members of this committee heard hours of testimony from those who shared how this bill would discriminate against and stigmatize kids in Wisconsin. Kids, parents, teachers, coaches, and others shared last session – and will share again this session – how the introduction of this bill is harmful and ostracizing to members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Although this bill will not become law in our state, its reintroduction alone is harmful. Recent national surveys have shown that 86% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported negative impacts to their mental health from the introduction of anti-transgender bills, with nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ young people stating that their mental health was poor “always” or “most of the time” due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation.

Assembly Bill 377 would further stigmatize and isolate transgender kids, who are already vulnerable. A recent national survey by the Trevor Project found that half of transgender and nonbinary young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, and a 2022 study in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence found that 86% of transgender youth reported suicidality with 56% reporting a previous suicide attempt. This bill will put the physical and mental health of transgender youth in Wisconsin at risk.

We ask that you not schedule Assembly Bill 377 for a vote. If AB 377 comes before you for a vote in this committee or on the Assembly floor, we ask that you vote no. This bill is deeply harmful, unnecessary, and dangerous. We hope that you will join us in telling transgender and nonbinary youth in our state that they are seen, are loved, and that they belong here in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

			
Mark Spreitzer	Tim Carpenter	Greta Neubauer	Lee Snodgrass
State Senator	State Senator	State Representative	State Representative
15th Senate District	3rd Senate District	66th Assembly District	57th Assembly District



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To: Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

From: Senator Mark Spreitzer, Senator Tim Carpenter, Representative Greta Neubauer, and Representative Lee Snodgrass

RE: Assembly Bill 378

Date: October 4, 2023

Chair Murphy and committee members:

As members of the Wisconsin Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus, we are submitting written testimony today in opposition to Assembly Bill 378. We ask that our testimony be shared with all members of the committee, and be entered into the committee record for this bill.

This bill discriminates against transgender students in Wisconsin by denying transgender women the opportunity to participate in women's sports. All young people should have the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored athletics consistent with their gender identity.

Categorical exclusion of transgender women from participating in school sports alongside their peers is harmful because it singles out transgender youth and denies them the opportunities provided by organized sports and being part of a team. Studies have shown that participating in youth sports can lead to lifelong, positive impacts on a child's physical, mental, emotional, and social health. In addition to helping students stay fit and build physical activity into their lives, youth sports allow students to develop deep and lasting friendships with their peers. Athletes learn life skills such as empathy, leadership, perseverance, and teamwork that will help them throughout the rest of their lives. We know that access to youth sports is crucially important to every student's success.

This bill also likely violates federal law. In 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that federal bans on sex discrimination must be read to prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity. This means that where the federal government bans discrimination on the basis of sex, it also bans discrimination against transgender people. The U.S. Department of Education is currently engaged in federal rulemaking to make clear that categorical, one-size-fits-all restrictions on transgender students participating in organized school athletics violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Assembly Bill 378 was previously introduced in the 2021-2022 legislative session as 2021 Assembly Bill 195. Last session, members of this committee heard hours of testimony from those who shared how this



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bill would discriminate against and stigmatize transgender and nonbinary college students in Wisconsin. Students, parents, teachers, coaches, and others shared last session – and will share again this session – how the introduction of this bill is harmful and ostracizing to members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Although this bill will not become law in our state, its reintroduction alone is harmful. Recent national surveys have shown that 86% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported negative impacts to their mental health from the introduction of anti-transgender bills, with nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ young people stating that their mental health was poor “always” or “most of the time” due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation.

Assembly Bill 378 would further stigmatize and isolate transgender youth, who are already vulnerable. A recent national survey by the Trevor Project found that half of transgender and nonbinary young people seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, and a 2022 study in the Journal of Interpersonal Violence found that 86% of transgender youth reported suicidality with 56% reporting a previous suicide attempt. This bill will put the physical and mental health of transgender youth in Wisconsin at risk.

We ask that you not schedule Assembly Bill 378 for a vote. If AB 378 comes before you for a vote in this committee or on the Assembly floor, we ask that you vote no. This bill is deeply harmful, unnecessary, and dangerous. We hope that you will join us in telling transgender and nonbinary youth in our state that they are seen, are loved, and that they belong here in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

			
Mark Spreitzer	Tim Carpenter	Greta Neubauer	Lee Snodgrass
State Senator	State Senator	State Representative	State Representative
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To: Assembly Committee on Health, Aging, and Long-Term Care

From: Senator Mark Spreitzer, Senator Tim Carpenter, Representative Greta Neubauer, and Representative Lee Snodgrass

RE: Assembly Bill 465

Date: October 4, 2023

Chair Moses and committee members:

As members of the Wisconsin Legislative LGBTQ+ Caucus, we are submitting written testimony today in opposition to Assembly Bill 465. We ask that our testimony be shared with all members of the committee, and be entered into the committee record for this bill.

Gender-affirming care includes a range of services for nonbinary and transgender people, including puberty blockers, gender-affirming hormones, and surgery. Gender-affirming care reduces gender dysphoria – the clinically-significant psychological distress that results when one’s gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth – and helps people live healthy and authentic lives.

Every major medical organization – including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, the American Nurses Association, the Endocrine Society, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, and the World Medical Association – attests that **gender-affirming care is safe, medically necessary, and saves lives.**

Legislators should not interfere in private decisions that belong in the hands of patients, their doctors, and their family. This bill would prevent doctors from providing life-saving, medically necessary care to their patients in Wisconsin by banning gender-affirming medical care, including medications to delay puberty, for transgender and nonbinary Wisconsinites under the age of 18. The bill would even permanently revoke the licenses of doctors who refer their patients to receive medically necessary care outside of Wisconsin.

Assembly Bill 465 would put the physical and mental health of transgender and nonbinary youth in Wisconsin at risk. Medical studies have shown that receiving gender-affirming care leads transgender and nonbinary people to experience significantly lower rates of depression and suicidality, both over the short-term and over their lifetimes. Youth that received puberty blockers and hormone therapy had 60% lower odds of moderate or severe depression and 73% lower odds of suicidality, according to a recent



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study published in JAMA Network Open. It is cruel to force transgender youth who have already medically transitioned to discontinue gender-affirming hormones and go through a puberty that is contrary to their gender identity. This bill harms transgender and nonbinary youth by removing their access to critical healthcare that is backed by decades of research and supported by every major medical association representing over 1.3 million doctors in the United States.

Although this bill will not become law in our state, its introduction alone is harmful. Recent national surveys have shown that 86% of transgender and nonbinary youth reported negative impacts to their mental health from the introduction of anti-transgender bills, with nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ young people stating that their mental health was poor “always” or “most of the time” due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation.

We ask that you not schedule Assembly Bill 465 for a vote. If AB 465 comes before you for a vote in this committee or on the Assembly floor, we ask that you vote no. This bill is deeply harmful and dangerous. We hope that you will join us in telling transgender and nonbinary youth in our state that they are seen, are loved, and that they belong here in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

			
Mark Spreitzer	Tim Carpenter	Greta Neubauer	Lee Snodgrass
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