

My wife Melanie and I have 2 sons ... Paul and Joey ... that attend West High School here in Anchorage.

Each Fall we attend the OPEN HOUSE night at West ... where we sit in the auditorium and listen to the Principal tout the benefits of students getting involved in extra curricular activities. HE urges us as parents to make sure our kids engage and become active members in the West high community – the Principal explains that those student that do get involved are happier, ...more successful, better balanced, ...do better in the classroom ... and overall have a more memorable ... richer ... high school experience.

He assures us that whatever it is ... our kids are interested in ... OR ... already LOVE to do ... that that activity can be found at West High.

Well, ... among other things ... our boys love to play Ice Hockey.

The have been playing most of their lives.

When our older son Paul – now a Junior - got to West High 2 years ago he had the good fortune to be able to play on the varsity team as a 9th grader. The next summer, however, before his sophomore year, ...because of the current ASAA Dual Participation rule ... he had to make a decision – and whereas it might not seem like much to many of the adults in this room – it was an agonizing decision for a 15 year old athlete. He was forced to choose between representing his state as a member of the Tier 1 TEAM ALASKA team ... or ...to give up on his TIER 1 ambition ... so he could play for his School. He chose the latter. And with that he was forced to give up playing his sport at the highest level.

Our younger son, Joey, now in 10th grade also had the opportunity to play high school hockey last year as freshman. But then ... he too this past summer was confronted with the same painful choice ... to represent his STATE ... OR... Represent his School ... His Tier 1 team last year was 1 game away from making the national tournament ... and as difficult as it was to be forced off the West High team ... he was not ready to give up on his TIER 1 teammates and they all vowed to stick together for another shot at representing Alaska at nationals this year. But ... with that choice, ... unless we come together and do right by these young athletes here this week ... Joey will be watching his brother ... and former West High Eagle teammates from the bleachers this season – not with them on the ice.

And why was it that this rule was enacted 3 decades ago? We are told it was to mitigate scheduling conflicts between High school hockey ... AND comp Hockey. And that may have been the case in 1995.

{PICK UP SCHEDULE}

But ... This is the WEST High and TEAM ALASKA schedules for this current season. At this point there are 3 known schedule conflicts. That is maybe ... all told 4.5 hours of hockey conflicts ... over the next 4 months ... essentially 1 hour of conflict per month ... and b/c of that ... this outdated, inconsistent, tired, overreaching handbook rule is going to deny Joey – and dozens of others - the opportunity to represent their schools as active members of their hockey teams.

My guess is that none of the current ASAA Board member were on this Board 30 years ago when the current HOCKEY DUAL PARTICIPATION rule was implemented.

It is a rule that was enacted by others ...

...a rule that you all simply inherited.

And sadly ... It is rule that denies our young people opportunity.

It as rule that is inconsistent at best ... discriminatory at worst.

It is a rule that disenfranchises a sub-set of the student population.

Boys – NOT girls.

Upperclassmen – NOT freshmen

And hockey players – NOT swimmers, soccer players, or any other athletes of any other ASAA sport.

And we hope it is a rule ... that the ASAA Board will have the foresight, ... the courage, ... and the wherewithal to amend this week ... in a show of support for these students who have done nothing wrong ... but play the game they love And Who are pleading with you for the opportunity to do so as members of their school team.

As I close I want to express my gratitude to ASAA ... and remind us all about the ASAA Mission.

... Operating thru the stated ASAA MISSION STATEMENT – “To provide and promote Opportunities ... through activities ... for ALL Alaskan Students.”

... ASAA does amazing things for our young people. ASAA creates and fosters the platform for our young people to enrich their lives, ... to make memories,... and to experience all the very best things of the high school experience.

Today we ask the ASAA BOARD to look ... to your own ASAA MISSION STATEMENT ... for guidance and direction this week as you deliberate and vote on this matter ... and ultimately you come together ... “TO PROVIDE AND PROMOTE THIS OPPORTUNITY ... FOR these Alaskan Students ... to engage in their high school activity in time for this upcoming high school hockey season.

Good morning, my name is Wescott Bott.

I am the father of two boys who have played hockey since they were little. This is my oldest son's second season of Tier 1 comp hockey and last year as a freshman he played varsity hockey for West High. That was an amazing experience for him. My youngest son is on a similar path.

The time has come to simply eliminate the dual participation rule for Tier 1, and to figure out long term solutions to improve the rule for Tier 2 comp hockey. Jamie Dittrich, Nate Anderson, and I developed a cooperative framework for a better system, especially for Tier 1. Billy has that proposal.

Now, some might say, "Why should we exempt a few kids from the rule just because they might be the 'best' hockey players". At face value that seems like a fair point. But here's why... Tier 1 kids represent their state on the National stage. These Tier 1 comp players, BOYS AND GIRLS, have worked their butts off...many since 5 years old to get to where they are now, so ASAA should be PROMOTING opportunities ... or at least not PREVENTING them. PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES is actually ASAA's mission statement, so get the adult politics out of the way and let kids play hockey during their few short years of high school.

Also, think bigger picture... There's been a severe out-migration of young people from this state. I read the other day that Alaska's population of teenagers is down 17 percent since 2012. This rule is actually causing a little bit of that out-migration. At my son's age group SIX of Alaska top hockey players have already left. Most of them never come back. Be part of the solution to this problem by fixing this rule. Allow them the amazing high school hockey experience that many of these kids had last year and that might be just enough of a hook to keep them from leaving.

It is time for ASAA to ACT on this. Those of you from regions WITHOUT hockey programs, you might not have a dog in this fight, but I beg you to vote for what is right for the kids. Mr. Strickland and members of the board... thank you for your patience and thoughtful listening on so many phone calls and emails.

6 October 2023

TO: ASAA Board of Directors
FROM: Scott McIlroy, Mark Jones, Reed Greenwood, Tyler Norene, Andy Weiland, Matt Kirby
RE: ASAA Hockey Dual Participation Rule

At this point we think it is safe to assume that ASAA board members and staff are aware of ASAA's Non-School Participation Rule for high school hockey, also known as the Dual Participation Rule. While this rule was put in place decades ago to prevent schedule conflicts between competitive league hockey and high school hockey, it is now outdated and penalizes exactly the kids for whom it should be promoting opportunities. As a result, the very best hockey players in Alaska are forced to watch their high school games from the bleachers. This rule in its current form goes against ASAA's mission to "promote opportunities" and ASAA's values of "integrity and inclusivity". As many of you are aware there is a small group of Alaska's high school students who play at the very highest level of youth hockey called Tier 1 or "Team Alaska". Tier 1 players would have few conflicts with the high school hockey season, yet the Rule arbitrarily prevents them from playing high school hockey.

What came to light only days ago is blatant gender inequity that is caused by the Rule. Before explaining the recent revelations, we stress that we are delighted that girls are getting opportunities to play high school hockey and we hope to see that trend continue. However, when girls participate in direct violation of a rule that is vigorously enforced for boys, we have deliberate inequality.

Last season two girls who played full-season Tier 1 comp hockey also played full-season high school hockey for schools in the Anchorage School District. Whether or not they had waivers from ASAA to do so is irrelevant. The fact is that countless Tier 1 boys had to watch their high school games from the bleachers – or they had to sacrifice the option of playing Tier 1 for the entire season while two girls in the exact same situation did not – and that is unfair and discriminatory. The fact that the staunchest proponent of keeping this outdated Rule in place is the same high school hockey coach who knowingly allowed one of these ineligible girls to play is the pinnacle of hypocrisy.

We would prefer to look forward to fixing this issue rather than rearward. ASAA can fix this issue by creating a permanent blanket waiver or exemption of the Rule for all Tier 1 hockey players, both boys and girls. Let's get adult politics out of the way and do what is best for these kids, many of whom have worked hard since 5 years old to get to the point that they are good enough to represent their State on the national stage. Let's promote opportunities for them to be able to also represent their schools on the ice. If we allow Tier 1 players to also play in the thrilling high school hockey atmosphere, we will see the quality of high school hockey improve, we will see fewer of Alaska's best hockey players leaving the state at age 15, and we might even see more girls playing high school hockey. High school hockey coaches across the state have signed a pledge to make this work and to be flexible and professional in managing Tier 1 scheduling conflicts.

ASAA must fix this issue for this season for Tier 1. Don't make these kids watch another season from the bleachers. ASAA already kicked this can down the road in three previous board meetings. Exempting Tier 1 will have little disturbance, if any, on the high school season. We proved that last season with the two girls and all the freshmen boys who played fulltime Tier 1 AND high school without incident. If ASAA is considering eliminating the Rule entirely, then perhaps the Rule could be phased out next year for Tier 2. Tier 2 comp hockey might need a lot more time to coordinate.

[Reed] My name is Reed Bott. [Joey] And I'm Joey Dittrich.

[Reed] We are sophomores at West High School. Last year as freshmen we were able to play Tier 1 hockey **AND** High School hockey, because freshmen are exempt from the dual participation rule. We made the West varsity team and we went on to play in the championship game against Chugiak. The whole season and especially the end of season tournament was one of the most amazing experiences of our lives. Playing for our high school in front of a standing-room-only crowd was an honor and the thrill of our lives so far.

[Joey] Now, lets talk about Tier 1 Comp hockey. Tier 1 hockey players represent their state at the highest comp hockey level in the country. We need a full practice schedule and exposure to other Tier 1 teams in the Lower 48 to be competitive at this level. Some of the Tier 1 players have a chance to go on to play college hockey and so we need to be challenged by the best teams from other states. If ASAA board doesn't fix this rule then you will force us into having to choose between representing our State or representing our School, because ASAA won't allow us to do both. Why are our buddies who play soccer and baseball not forced to make the same decision with their sports?

[Reed] Since we played for comp **AND** high school hockey at the same time last year, it was our responsibility to communicate with both coaches to make it work. There were only a few schedule conflicts and both coaches were reasonable and accommodating. In the process we learned how to be a better communicator and how to be responsible for our own time-management. If you will please allow Tier 1 players to play high school hockey this season, we will **OWN** this responsibility and communicate with our coaches and make good decisions.

[Joey] Now, some worry that doing both Tier 1 and high school is too much exercise. That's ridiculous. In fact our Tier 1 opponents in the Lower 48 still get more ice-time than we would playing both Tier 1 and High School. By the time the high school season comes along Tier 1 has been hard at work for months and is already highly conditioned. We welcome the additional ice.

[Reed] Again, please do not let another season go by where the top hockey players in the state are forced to watch from the bleachers! Ninth graders and girls have already proven we can do both. My teammates and I are down to just **3 years** left of high school....PLEASE DO NOT WAIT ANOTHER YEAR to do what is best for student athletes. **PLEASE Exempt Tier 1 from that ASAA rule THIS season.**

Georgianna Buhler
7 Mile Zimovia Highway
Wrangell, Alaska

October 9, 2023

To the Alaska School Activities Association Board of Directors and Administrators:

I am submitting this written and oral testimony to the Alaska School Activities Association in my capacity as a community member, a parent, a grandparent and former school board member. The purpose of my testimony is to support the provisions of 4 AAC 06.115(b)(5) as adopted on September 21, 2023 as follows:

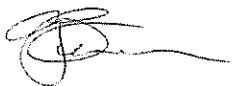
“(D) ensures fairness, safety, and equal opportunity for female students in high school athletics by providing, in consideration of responses to a school survey under 4 AAC 06.520, that if a separate high school athletics team is established for female students, participation shall be limited to females who were assigned female at birth; in this subparagraph, "athletics" means competitive or contact sports, as determined by the association.”

In addition, the purpose of my testimony is to advocate *against* recommendations to create a waiver process for the circumvention of 4 AAC 06.115(b)(5) as suggested by some.

Three of my children – two daughters, and one grandson – have participated in ASAA sanctioned activities including regional and state level activities. I have three additional grandchildren who potentially will one day participate in ASAA sanctioned activities. Two girls and one boy. It is for their future that I am advocating – literally -- for a fair and equal playing field.

Time does not permit me to address all the reasons and rationales for advocating against medically assisted males participating in female activities: safety, Biblical beliefs. But I do want to point out the lesser discussed rationale. As a woman, it is an affront to me to see medically assisted males participating in female sports, dominating female sports, and injuring other biologically born female athletes. Historically, women had to fight hard for the rights to play on a level playing field in sports and to vote. As a woman, I will use both my voice and my vote to advocate for women – females who were assigned female at birth – to not lose those hard-fought rights through or to appropriation by males – biologically born males or medically assisted males. I want my grandchildren and Alaska’s students to have a level, safe and *equal* playing field.

I respectfully request ASAA not adopt a waiver process to circumvent the provisions of 4 AAC 06.115(b)(5).



Georgianna Buhler

Subject: Earl Banning comments

Date: Monday, October 9, 2023 at 10:25:08 AM Alaska Daylight Time

From: Earl Banning

To: ASAA Board

Here are my written comments

Good morning. My name is Dr. Earl Banning. (Spell) I'm an active duty Neuropsychologist and Alaska resident. I'm speaking out against the discriminatory bylaw changes that will eliminate trans girls from playing with the teams they identify with.

These new rules do not represent the opinion of trans athletes, parents of trans children, medical or mental health professionals. These changes will cause harm, real harm and make life for a marginalized group even more difficult. These changes are the direct impact of transphobic individuals attempting to cancel a group of kids from existing. And today, they are winning and this association is going along with a terrible decision.

Who do these rules help? no one. These rule changes address a fictitious child who goes through the intense social and emotional pressures to identify as trans to win a female sport. Has this ever happened? no. Would this be unfair? I'm not sure..... because this isn't a thing. It's just a monster created as a way to scare people into codifying bigotry. Also the whole premise of a cis child pretending to be trans to cheat... well usually we address the cheater. We don't exclude an entire group.

Who do these rules hurt? Everyone. Yes. Every student. we are cynically told "We want trans athletes to participate even if it's NOT THE TEAM THEY WANT TO PLAY ON. Where is the fairness in that? Every other student can play with the team they identify with. These rules impact female athletes. Anyone can challenge any female athlete who is too good or doesn't appear to meet some made up gender stereotype and accuse that child of being trans... who then must defend themselves. This is fairness? These rules impact the boys team, who will now include students who identify as female. Has anyone stated they want that...of any gender? These rules impact all students. Even those who don't participate in sports as they watch one marginalized group get outed, be accused of being cheaters, and have rules specifically changed to target them...for a problems that doesn't exist. Again, I'm missing the fairness in all of this

I guess we can just pass these absurd rules, knowing they are wrong, hope nothing bad happens, and hope someone prevails in court but this doesn't occur in a vacuum. These decisions matter. What to do? It seems legally, hands may be tied. However, this group is not fit to implement these changes. I'm asking you to pause and reach out to trans athletes, caregivers, and professionals on how to implement these discriminatory rules in a way to cause the least amount of damage. To me, that seems fair. Thank you.



Alaska School Activities Association
4048 Laurel St. #203
Anchorage, AK 99508

Re: Oppose Bylaw Change Article 7 Section 1 and 11

October 9th, 2023

Dear Members of the Alaska School Activities Association:

Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates – Alaska (PPAA) writes in strong opposition of the proposed bylaw changes requiring trans athletes participate in the sport corresponding to their sex assigned at birth. This amendment is a blatantly discriminatory amendment designed to exclude transgender girls and deny them the ability to participate fully in sports and in school community. The bylaw change is part of a coordinated nationwide attack aimed at erasing and excluding trans people from sports, school communities, and all aspects of public life. To protect all students' privacy and health, we call upon the members of this body to oppose changing the existing bylaws.

Transgender youth should be treated with dignity and respect and should have the opportunity to live a healthy life, just like everyone else. Denying trans students the opportunity to participate in sports strips them of the many benefits associated with participating in sports, including better self-esteem and improved grades. Like all other students, trans students deserve the same chances to learn teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, self-discipline, and to build a sense of belonging with their peers. When trans athletes are excluded from participation on a sports team that aligns with their gender identity, the result is often complete exclusion from sports and extracurriculars. This leads to stigmatization and isolation of trans students, which undermine students' health, safety, and social and emotional development. Discriminatory treatment of trans children heighten trans students' risk of being bullied and attacked, which increases their risk of mental health issues and suicide.

Transgender kids want the opportunity to play sports for the same reasons other kids do: to be a part of a team where they feel like they belong. Alaska students have been participating in school sports consistent with their gender identity for decades, and there have been no documented concerns related to unfair competition from trans athletes. Just like other youth, trans youth have varied level of physical ability and strength, and they are not inherently better or worse athletes based on gender or gender identity. There is simply no data to support fairness concerns when trans athletes participates, especially since less than 0.6 percent of people identify as transgender and not all want to play sports. There have also been no reports in Alaska of male students pretending to be transgender to join a female team and gain competitive advantage. Simply put, this change in bylaws does not address any real-life problems, but it would cause real damage to all students in Alaska.

This blatantly discriminatory amendment is overwhelmingly opposed by health care providers, faith leaders, parents, student athletes, business leaders, human rights advocates, and other community members. Inclusive policies for transgender students, on the other hand, are already in place for millions of students and are supported by a broad base of organizations, including Women's Sports Foundation, the YWCA, the National



Alliance Advocates - Alaska

Organization for Women, and many more. We urge you to demonstrate compassion and acceptance by voting down the amendment.

The proposed bylaw change would profoundly violate all students' privacy by forcing educators and coaches to police whether a student is trans or not, which the school is not legally or ethically authorized to do under medical privacy laws, professionalism standards, and non-discrimination laws. This interrogation wouldn't just apply to trans youth either: under this change, *any* student could have their gender disputed based and could be forced to prove their gender. Many pushing for this change erroneously claim that allowing trans athletes to participate will harm cisgender women. This amendment would invite gender policing and reinforces stereotypes that women are weak and in need of protection, a line that we hear time and again to justify controlling women and their bodies. This amendment would also especially target students of color and Indigenous students – who are already routinely policed, shamed, and dehumanized in school settings – because they would face outsized consequences as administrators perpetuate racist and sexist stereotypes about gender presentation. Title IX is about expanding opportunities for people to benefit from true, meaningful opportunities to participate in sports. Transgender people participating in sports doesn't change that; it is part of that. Including trans athletes promotes values of non-discrimination and inclusion among all student athletes, which leads to more cohesion and better athletic performance for the whole team.

We encourage board members to see this proposed bylaw change for what it is really about: whether LGBTQ people should be treated fairly across all areas of life – or whether they can be unfairly targeted and excluded just because of who they are. Instead of restricting trans athletes, the ASAA should be celebrating the diversity and richness they bring to our communities, schools, and sports.

Oral testimony given on October 9th for the record:

Thank you members of the Alaska School Activities Association,
For the record, my name is Morgan Lim. I am a Juneau resident and today I am testifying on behalf of Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates – Alaska. PPAA strongly opposes the proposed bylaws changes to Article 7 Sections 1 and 11, which would require trans girl athletes be banned from girls sports statewide. The bylaw change is part of a coordinated nationwide attack aimed at erasing and excluding trans people from sports, school communities, and all aspects of public life. To protect all students' privacy and health, we call upon the members of this body to oppose changing the existing bylaws.

Trans girls are girls. And all trans children are children first. The adults in this room should not forget that today. Trans youth should be treated with dignity and respect and should have the opportunity to live a healthy life, just like everyone else.

Transgender kids want the opportunity to play sports for the same reasons other kids do: to be a part of a team where they feel like they belong. Alaska students have been participating in school sports consistent with their gender identity for decades, and there have been no documented concerns related to unfair competition from trans athletes. When trans athletes are not allowed to compete in the sport corresponding to their affirmed gender, that means that they don't compete in sports at all. Imagine living your whole life as a girl. Where your friends, family, and teachers all see you as a girl, but in this one very public aspect of life you are being forced to



be something you are not. Simply put, this change in bylaws does not address any real-life problems, but it would cause real life damage to students in Alaska.

We encourage board members to see these proposed changes for what they really are: A few people in power trying to circumvent our democratic systems to pass a fear and not fact based bylaw by this organization that they could not pass in the legislature. They are trying to get you to bare the brunt both publicly and legally for their culture war. Do not fall into their trap. You do not need to pass this bylaw that will put the ASAA at odds with non-discrimination ordinances throughout the state. You cannot be compelled to discriminate, and you should resist any attempts to coerce you into doing just that. LGBTQ people should be treated fairly across all areas of life. The ASAA has been entrusted to promote participation across Alaska, to be an example for its values. Do not be a political pawn and chess piece in our governor's agenda of hate.

Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates – Alaska strongly urges all members of the Alaska School Activities Association to oppose any amendments to the existing bylaws that would isolate, single out, and discriminate against trans children. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Morgan Lim
Government Relations Manager
Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates – Alaska

My name is Amber O'Brien and I'm testifying on behalf of myself and my 3 children who all attend school in the Matsu and are all 3 currently running track.

We have been involved in youth sports since my daughter who will be graduating in a matter of days was in 4th grade. Her elementary school offered a number of sports in the hopes of getting kids interested and she tried soccer, basketball, volleyball, and then she tried track and that was it. She was in love, she started to run and she never stopped. Running xc and track every year since and dragging her brothers down that rabbit hole with her. In fact, I think her youngest brother's 1st words were "faster, faster". Isn't that what we're supposed to be doing here? Fostering the love of sports and athletics in kids, not gatekeeping them?

When my kids talk to other kids about their experiences on team and in club sports its always to try and convince them to come along and give it a try, they love their sport and they want others to love it too! The kids I know from my time in sports and with my kids they'd never be so heartless as to want to push another kid out, in fact I think team sports are supposed to foster the feeling of belonging and acceptance.

Kids in sports are always told by the athletic directors in schools that they're role models, that they're representing their school and community when they step out onto the court or field, or track, what exactly are they representing if were telling SOME KIDS that they just can't play because they just don't fit in the right boxes??? I ask this board to remember the simple adage that no one is remembered kindly for who they excluded, be remembered for who you included. Be remembered for doing the right thing and let ALL kids play.

Testimony of the ACLU of Alaska to the ASAA Board Meeting
October 9, 2023

Good morning. My name is Mara Kimmel and I am representing the ACLU of Alaska, where I am the Executive Director.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify, and to once again urge you to not move forward with a bylaw change to prohibit transgender girls from participating on girls' sports teams.

There are many implementation questions that remain concerning and unanswered, including those related to the policy's unconstitutional nature. Primary among our concerns is this question: How will ASAA and its member schools implement and enforce this bylaw change without violating the explicit privacy and due process protections embedded in Alaska's constitution? As a secondary concern, introducing a change like this in the middle of the school year, when sports are already underway, is going to be especially confusing and disruptive.

We don't raise these questions to suggest that ASAA figure out a way to make the bylaw work ahead of an effective date – we do so to illustrate that you shouldn't move forward with this policy.

In addition to being unconstitutional, the policy is unjustified, unnecessary, and divisive. The state has clearly not shown that the regulation is necessary, basing its proposal and passage entirely on an unscientific literature review and imagined cases of transgender girls harming cisgender girls. These theoretical fears are not enough to justify these discriminatory policies. A recent federal court decision said that a vague and unsubstantiated concern that transgender women might one day dominate women's athletics is insufficient justification for passing such a wholesale exclusionary policy.

While we can see the merit in ASAA striving to create policy and bylaws that anticipate different scenarios, adopting this policy is definitively picking a side and letting discrimination onto the sports field.

Moreover, adopting the bylaw change means you are perpetuating harm to our students and families. Hundreds upon hundreds of queer and other supportive student-athletes, parents, friends, teachers and educators have explained in testimony before this body and before DEED how this policy will lead to – perhaps already has led to – exclusion, bullying, and deterioration of the well-being of transgender and LGBTQ+ children. Kids are smart – they know better than adults what is happening, and queer children especially are all too aware that their very existence is the issue on the table here.

We recognize that you may feel compelled to adopt this bylaw change to align with the recently passed regulation from the state Board of Education. But the fact that DEED adopted a discriminatory regulation does not justify ASAA doing the same. Nor would DEED's action insulate ASAA from expensive legal challenges if it decides to pass an unconstitutional, invasive, and discriminatory policy of its own.

We trust that you each took a place on ASAA's board because you genuinely care about providing quality opportunities for Alaskan children to be part of a team, or a club in accordance with the ASAA bylaws' expressed values of integrity, respect, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, and inclusivity. We urge you to embrace those values of inclusion and belonging when you take up the bylaw change later in the meeting.

Testimony to the ASAA

October 9, 2023

From: The Rev. Michael Burke

President, The Alaska Christian Conference

Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed bylaw changes before you.

I am The Rev. Michael Burke, Rector or Sr. Pastor of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Anchorage, and am here in my official capacity as President of the Alaska Christian Conference, a statewide network of Christian leaders and churches. We have been active in ministry throughout the state of Alaska since 1975.

Trans and non-binary youth are our youth. They are active and vital members of our churches and youth groups. They are a threat to no one.

It is a basic and foundational part of our Christian faith to recognize and fully support the image of God in every human being. Every. Human. Being.

We fully support our trans and non-binary youth and their basic human rights to fully participate in all school activities, including sports and activities, without discrimination of any sort.

Thank you, and may God bless you in your decision-making.

Respectfully submitted by

The Rev. Michael Burke

President, Alaska Christian Conference

907-440-7729 cell.

My name is Chandra Poe, I live in Anchorage Alaska, have two high school students in the public school system, and I am here today as the mother of a transgender girl to speak against policy and bylaw changes that exclude my child from participating in sports with other girls.

I addressed this board in May of this year urging you to reject proposed bylaw changes. In light of a recent decision by the Alaska DEED, I am here again to share my family's personal experience in the face of continued social and political attacks on our children. I can tell you that harm to transgender children is not theoretical. It is realized.

We went the dentist last month for a regular checkup, shortly after DEED's public resolution against transgender girls. When our very kind hygienist was making small talk as we settled and asked "what extracurricular activities are you into at school?", my daughter just looked over at me with tears in her eyes. She has just recently remembered the joy of physical activity and was hoping to join a school team in high school. She won't be able to anymore. Listening to all of the other speakers, I hear the joy and many benefits participating in sports gives to student athletes. My child will never have this opportunity.

It would be cool if either of my children had the talent, drive and determination to participate in sports at the collegiate, professional or Olympic level sports. If they did, there are existing policies in place at each of these levels to encourage fair and inclusive participation of all athletes. My kid, however, is not an elite athlete looking for world records or gold medals. She just wishes she could play soccer on a school team. And we will never know if playing on a high school team may have developed skills that would have allowed her to play on after school.

I see a section on your website titled "Bench bad behavior" – think before you speak. Changing regulations and policies to single out and exclude specific groups of children based on their gender identity creates harm. Keeping trans kids in the news, vilifying them publicly, putting a laser focus on their bodies and activities and identities, creates harm.

As the mother of a transgender girl, I am fearful for my child's safety every time she leaves the house. Discriminatory laws and policies targeting transgender people -- and the political rhetoric surrounding anti-transgender bills -- send a message that transgender people are not worthy of equal treatment. This enables and encourages exclusion and bullying of all transgender and non-binary students at every level. Within days of DEED's public meeting to adopt regulations specifically targeting transgender girls, a non-binary student on the Kenai peninsula was prohibited from participating in junior high running sports.

Your mission is to Provide and Promote Opportunities through Activities for all Alaska Students, including my children.