



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Scott W. DiMauro, President
Jeffrey Wensing, Vice President
Mark A. Hill, Secretary-Treasurer
Patricia Collins Murdock, Executive Director

The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

January 8, 2024

The Honorable Jason Stephens
Speaker of the Ohio House
77 South High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable Allison Russo
Minority Leader of the Ohio House
77 South High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Veto Override of House Bill 68

Dear Speaker Stephens and Leader Russo:

On behalf of the 120,000 members of the Ohio Education Association (OEA), I write this letter to express our strong opposition to the override of Governor DeWine's veto of House Bill (HB) 68. In agreement with the concerns expressed by Governor DeWine in his veto message, we believe that HB 68 would only serve to increase the mental and emotional strains placed on transgendered students seeking community and inclusion through participation in sports.

Athletics and other extracurricular programs provide an important opportunity for all students to learn, grow, and meet their full potential. HB 68 creates unnecessary regulations that limit student participation in high school and collegiate athletic teams. OEA has long stood for policies that are inclusive of students regardless of race, class, gender, or identity.

The proposed regulations in HB 68 also conflict with existing policies adopted by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) and the National College Athletic Association (NCAA). Further, these regulations would discriminate against some students by establishing an absolute prohibition on transgender female participation on teams designated only for female participants.

Current OHSAA policy allows transgender female participation on a female-designated sports team under certain conditions but does not have an absolute bar on participation for these students. The NCAA policy calls for transgender student-athlete participation policies to be determined by the national governing body of each sport.

OEA recommends that the State defer to the governing bodies of student athletics and not enact laws that contain unnecessary regulations that limit student participation.

In closing, we want all students to be treated with dignity and respect. We would hope that our elected officials create laws that protect and expand the basic rights of Ohioans, not simply use their power to exploit divisions and fears to control the political narrative and punish students for being their authentic selves.

For these reasons, OEA strongly urges you to vote "no" on the veto override of House Bill 68, so that we can ensure that Ohio is a place where all students have the freedom to be themselves.

Sincerely,

Scott DiMauro
President

CC: All Members, Ohio House of Representatives