



children's defense fund ohio

**House Higher Education
Committee
HB 6- Opponent Testimony
4/19/2023**

Chair Young, Ranking Member Miller and members of the Higher Education Committee-- the Children's Defense Fund-Ohio firmly believes that all children deserve to enjoy being children, and we work to defend and protect the joy of growing up for all children and youth, especially those most marginalized. **That is why we are urging this committee to reject House Bill 6.**

With more than four decades of advocacy on behalf of Ohio's children, it is the mission of the Children's Defense Fund to champion policies and programs that lift children out of poverty, protect them from abuse and neglect, and ensure their access to health care, quality education, and nutritional wellness.

There are few experiences that so unequivocally epitomize childhood more than the act of play, and participation in team sports is a very common way that children play and build key social, emotional, and cognitive competencies as well as community and a sense of belonging among other things. Denying this type of youth development for some students is discriminatory and communicates a very harmful message to Ohio's youngest citizens.

Further, the Ohio High School Athletic Association already has a policy in place regarding trans youth in sports in Ohio. This bill would reverse that history of equitable access and replace it with discrimination and bullying.

Not one single Ohio student athlete has testified as to how this bill would benefit them and their experience, but many and many more today have testified to the negative impacts it will have on them, their teams, and their schools. Please listen to those students and vote no on HB6.