



January 29, 2024

Honorable Chairman Rick Ladd
House Education Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 205-207
33 N State St., Concord, NH 03301

RE: NAMI NH Opposition to HB 1205

Dear Chairman Ladd and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Sam Hawkins, and I am the Public Policy Assistant at NAMI NH, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI NH is a non-profit, grassroots organization whose mission is to improve the lives of all people impacted by mental illness and suicide through support, education and advocacy. On behalf of NAMI NH, I am here today to speak in opposition to HB 1205, relative to women's school sports.

NAMI NH believes that freedom from stigma and discrimination is crucial to mental wellness. Acceptance and support within one's community plays a key role in the mental health of all people, including trans and nonbinary youth. Team sports especially can offer an affirming environment where youth can further connect with their peers and community. HB 1205 would limit access to these affirming spaces and activities and further damaging stigma for transgender and nonbinary youth, putting their mental health at risk.

Further, I want to emphasize that considering discriminatory policies is damaging, whether or not they pass into law. According to the Trevor Project, in 2023, "nearly 1 in 3 LGBTQ young people said their mental health was poor most of the time or always due to anti-LGBTQ policies and legislation." It is crucial that our policies promote mental wellness and create accepting, affirming environments, rather than limit them. For these reasons, NAMI NH urges the committee to vote Inexpedient to Legislate for HB 1205.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel C. Hawkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Samuel C. Hawkins

Find Help, Find Hope.

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