

Hello (salutations and thank yous) (to be written)...

Slide #1 (Title Slide)

When a girl laces up her sneakers and joins a team, the benefits begin with her own body and mind. She grows stronger, more confident, and learns resilience through every win and loss. But her impact doesn't stop there. Families come together in support, schools see better attendance and graduation rates, and communities gain healthier, more connected young people.

As these girls grow into women, the lessons of sport—teamwork, leadership, perseverance—carry into boardrooms, classrooms, and civic life. And when communities invest in women's professional sports, those ripples expand into real economic growth: fans in stadiums, stronger local businesses, increased tourism, and civic pride.

Sport, in this way, is more than a game. It is a public good—an engine that drives health, safety, opportunity, and economic development for everyone

Slide #2 - Vision Statement

Vision Statement: We want Oklahoma to be a place that the rest of country and world knows as being where girls and women in sports and in business are highly valued and seen as absolutely and fundamentally essential for creating financial stability and growth, and for being committed to enriching and improving the quality of its residents' lives through solid programs and policies that help us achieve these goals, and will therefore bring this vision to reality.

We think this vision is based on these Four Pillars of impact: Health & Wellness, Education & Career, Social & Cultural, and Economic.

We believe that the support of this body to include the equal language in SB280 that provides an economic incentive for women's professional teams - that is the same as for the men's pro sports teams - will illustrate to the girls and women of Oklahoma, and to the rest of the country, and to potential investors - that Oklahoma steadfastly and publicly supports women's sports in programs and policy, and will always provide the same opportunities for girls and women's sports teams, leagues and programs in Oklahoma, just the same as we do for our great boys' and men's sports teams, leagues and programs.

Slide #3 - Health & Wellness Key Benefits

Need opening emotional relevant story here..

*Engaging in sports provides girls with **essential skills** that foster confidence, teamwork, and leadership while promoting health and breaking down societal stereotypes.*

Slide #4 - Health & Wellness: Self-Esteem

Adolescent girls experience a precipitous drop in confidence during middle school years. Without intervention, that harms health, education, and future earnings.

Multiple reviews show sport/physical activity is linked to improved self-esteem and lower depression scores in girls and young women.

Recent studies of girls between the grades of five and 12 show that sports have a positive effect and impact on the girls' perception of themselves.

Surveys indicate that girls who play sports are more confident with who they are at least eight percentage points higher than girls that don't play sports. One report shows that girls that play sports are 16-percent less-likely to want to change their image.

Additionally, time spent on social media can impact self-esteem and body image for girls. Studies show that 44 percent of girls who spend four to six hours on social media a day are athletes, compared to 55 percent who are non-athletes - an 11-point gap.

Slide #5 - Health & Wellness: Physical & Mental Health

The health benefits for girls who play sports are numerous. Studies show that three times as many female high school athletes as non-athletes (20% and 6% respectively) labelled their health as excellent, they have fewer chronic illnesses, reduced risk of obesity, healthier menstruation, and stronger bones and reduced risk of osteoporosis.

Girls who play sports and form those habits when they are young are more likely to continue them into college and beyond, and those habits have long-term health benefits. Recent studies provide evidence that female athletes have less hypertension, lower cholesterol, more mobility and less anxiety.

Girls who play sports are ~11% more likely to report being “happy the way they are” and show higher confidence than non-participants during adolescence.

Sports and physical activity are linked to decreased likelihood of symptoms related to stress and depression. Teenage girls who participate in sports are less likely to be suicidal than girls who do not participate in sports.

Slide #6 - Health & Wellness: Reducing Risk

Sports have enormous influence on culture and can play an important role in preventing sexual and domestic violence. Youth sports, in particular, teach youth more than just how to play the game. Life lessons such as teamwork, leadership skills, accountability, and self-reflection can all be facilitated through participation in sport and sports teams.

Sport has the ability to lift up athletes on women's and girls' teams as their coaches and leaders play an important role in demanding and reinforcing a culture that denounces violence and supports healthy individuals, relationships, and communities.

Two national studies found that female school or community athletes are significantly less likely to use marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and hallucinogens. One study sponsored by the Women's Sports Foundation found that female athletes were less than half as likely to become pregnant as non-athletes, and more likely to abstain from sex through high school and use contraceptives.

Emerging evidence shows sport programs that include relationship-skills training (e.g., SPoRT) can reduce dating violence and sexual risk behaviors in adolescents.

Slide #7 - Education & Career Key Benefits

Need opening emotional relevant story here..

*Engaging in sports provides girls with **essential skills** that foster confidence, teamwork, and leadership while promoting health and breaking down societal stereotypes.*

Title IX history, legacy and this bill is an extension and continuation of this legacy? Continuing to move forward, not backward...expanding opportunities, taking the next step in that direction. the journey of 10,000 miles begins with the first step...

Slide #8 - Education & Career: Attendance & Grades

Kids who play sports do better in school. Because when youth are involved in sports, they develop skills that translate well into healthy school habits and attitudes. The skills they learn from sports include patience, planning, self-discipline, perseverance, respect for authority, commitment, social skills, responsibility, and team working skills. All this improves cognitive performance, which leads to improved academic functioning.

One study saw that student-athletes had higher attendance and graduation rates, and lower dropout rates than non-athletes.. Attendance is an essential factor when thinking about what factors contribute to a child's

success in school; the more days attended, the more time a student spends learning and practicing the topics which they are studying.

Slide #9 - Education & Career: Attending College

Studies done by the Women's Sports Foundation saw that students who participated in athletics had a more positive view of attending school, and had aspirations of attending a good college and achieving a four-year degree.

These studies are not saying that student-athletes are smarter than regular students. They are showing how skills developed and taught through team sports - like the value of commitment, personal motivation, the value of academic studies, and the importance of keeping grades up and attending school - directly correlate to better grades and students seeing value in their education.

Previous studies have found that high school athletes were more likely to go to college than their non-athlete peers. High school sports participation has the potential to build academic, social, and psychosocial skills, and participation may signal that the college applicant is well-rounded, fit, and successful at competition. Higher levels of going to college among athletes may be attributable to several factors such as athlete recruitment, advantage in the admissions process, and improved academic, social, and psychosocial characteristics.

Slide #10 - Education & Career: Career Outcomes

According to some researchers, women who are athletes are more achievement oriented, independent, self-confident and inner-controlled. Nearly nine out of ten women executives in a recent survey said sports helped them be more disciplined, and nearly seven out of ten said sports helped them to develop leadership skills that contributed to their professional success.

With their problem-solving skills and team-building experiences, women who have played sports are uniquely positioned to lead in the corporate world, and indeed 94% of women in leadership and CEO-level roles in corporate America played sports growing up.

Gender equality at work cannot happen without gender equality in society — and sport is a powerful way to advance women in society.

Slide #11 - Social & Economic Key Benefits

Participation in school sports correlates with better school retention, higher grades, and leadership skills — which map to stronger labor market outcomes for women later in life.

Slide #12 - Social & Economic: Role Models & Powerful Influencers

In recent years, the sports world has witnessed a remarkable shift in gender dynamics, with female athletes being recognized as powerful influencers, especially among young girls.

Now more than ever women in sports are getting more attention, as women's sports media coverage has tripled since 2019 after remaining stagnant for three decades. One recent survey found that 88 percent of sports fans regard pro-women athletes as impactful role models for young women.

With more girls watching sports, high-profile athletes know that they command a powerful platform which they can use to encourage girls to take up and remain in sports so they benefit from all the advantages playing sports affords them in life.

The findings of another study made clear that female athletes serve as more than just athletic figures; they also represent inspiration and resilience. With two-thirds of the girls stating that seeing successful female athletes on the pitch or in arenas has increased their confidence, rising coverage in media and during athletic competitions is offering young girls more chances to see valuable, relatable role models.

This will only continue to increase as the United States looks forward to hosting the FIFA Women's World Cup in 2031.

Slide #13 - Social & Economic: Builds Character for Leading Well-Rounded Lives

One author wrote a few years ago that the old adage that sports builds character, mental toughness, teamwork and other intangibles that will last a lifetime appears to be especially true for girls and women. Experts say that team sports offer lessons to girls that they often don't get elsewhere. And research shows experience in sports is a common trait among top female business leaders.

"Sports, and particularly team sports, tend to give women and girls things that they otherwise have a hard time getting, like resilience, grit, knowledge of teamwork, knowledge of leadership. All of these things are crucial and they all are learned probably better on a sports team than anywhere else," said Debora Spar, a professor at Harvard Business School.

Playing sports also teaches girls about respect, the value of exercise, about overcoming obstacles, and about the benefit of setting goals. Developing these life skills helps young people build character and lead well-rounded lives.

Slide #14 - Social & Economic: Increased Visibility & Representation

One of the most important ways that female role models can inspire girls to play sports is from their visibility and representation in the world of sports. When girls see women who look like them, have similar experiences, and share their interests and passions playing sports, it can help them feel more confident and motivated to get involved themselves. This is done through media coverage, social media, and other platforms that showcase female athletes and their achievements.

Female athletes use their platforms to advocate for greater gender equity and inclusivity in sports. By speaking out against discrimination and advocating for policy changes that support female athletes, they can help create a more welcoming and supportive environment for girls and women in sports.

The visibility of female athletes on various platforms, ranging from television to social media, is playing a pivotal role in empowering young girls and instilling in them a sense of belonging within the sporting community.

(Slide #15 - Social & Economic: Increased Overcoming Negative Perceptions)

Oklahoma is perceived to be a state that is not very supportive of girls and women and the challenges they face in life. Several studies have concluded that Oklahoma ranks at or near the bottom for states that have policies and programs in place that help and support women as they navigate their lives.

This may have negative economic and social repercussions if educated, skilled Oklahoma women do not want to live here and move to other states to pursue their career and family dreams, and if women from out of state don't want to relocate here due to uncertainty of how they may be viewed and supported, and if companies don't want to start a business or move their business to Oklahoma for the same reasons, due to this perception - that is available to anyone that does any research online about.

If we are to change this perception this is one area in which we can start to do that.

Slide #15 - End of Section #1

Q&A

Slide #16 - Economic Case: Why Women's Pro Sports Matter

It is important to have women's pro sports teams and leagues for the exact same reasons it's important to have men's pro sports teams and leagues. From the perspective of practicing support for a free-market economy, having more choices for consumers is a good thing, and this includes choices and how and where to spend our discretionary income on forms of entertainment - including sports entertainment. Competition for consumer dollars ideally generates better products and services for those consumers out of organizations' fears of potentially losing those dollars by having products and services that are inferior to those of their competition. It forces organizations to step up their game - pun intended.

Professional sports generate a flurry of local economic activity - from direct spending on things like ticket sales, sponsorship deals, in-stadium merchandise sales, and on food and beverage sales at the ballpark, and from indirect spending on things like hotel rooms and short-term rentals, airfares and ride shares, sales of groceries, on restaurants and bars, and from retail merchandise sales. If you have ever experienced a football game day in Norman or Stillwater you know what I am talking about because you see it all around you all over the town all day and night.

Jocelyn Alo is a professional softball player for the Oklahoma City Spark of the Association of Fastpitch Professionals (AFP). She played college softball for the Oklahoma Sooners. Alo was named 2018 NFCA National Freshman of the Year, and named USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year in 2021 and 2022. She is the NCAA Division I career leader in home runs

Slide #17 - Economic Case: Why Women's Pro Sports Matter

As pointed out in the previous section, the growing interest and popularity of women's pro sports creates more exposure and visibility as more networks pay for broadcasting rights to try and take advantage reaching this growing audience and gain more viewers for their networks - so they can in turn sell more advertising to brands that also want to reach this audience. This injects more cash into the pro women's sports ecosystem, thus attracting even more fans and sponsors - and the cycle feeds itself and repeats itself.

But why are women's sports growing interest and becoming more popular in the first place - to spur all this economic activity around them? I argue it's primarily for two reasons: Firstly - Societal norms have changed. As the years pass in the wake of the landmark passing of Title IX in 1972, generations of people have now grown up with girls and women competing in sports and so, unlike before that time, this is our "new normal". It is now expected. It is the rule, not the exception. And by people, I mean "men". Men who are fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, friends, boyfriends, spouses and partners of girls and women who play sports are more than just used to it now - we fully endorse and support - it because we know how much good it has produced for the girls and women we love, and for our families, schools, communities, and this nation. We've seen it with our own eyes. We've experienced it firsthand. Yes we still have some work to do, as evidenced in being here for this occasion today. But this is the new standard and it's only moving forward, not backward.

Secondly, the product is better than it has ever been before. And by product I mean women's sports as a form of - and choice for - sports entertainment. Although there has always been amazing and talented women in sports (Wilma Rudolph, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Billie Jean King, Shannon Miller, Mia Hamm, Althea Gibson, Anika Sorenstam, Cheryl Miller, and Marta - just to name a VERY few), there has never been as many talented women athletes - or teams or leagues to showcase that talent - as there are today.

The truth is that people have to want to watch women's pro sports. It has to be entertaining. The games and competitions have to attract and hold our attention. They have to be fun to attend or watch on TV. Ultimately they have to deliver excitement and joy. And because the talent is so undeniably good now, people do want to watch! There are so many factors that go into this equation, and we don't have time to go into all of them now. But the core of the matter is, that as a choice for fans of sports, among all the choices they have, women's sports are now a truly viable choice, on their own merit. And they are growing, and will continue to do so.

Once a sport attracts enough eyeballs and ears, it has the potential to capture hearts and minds. This is the basis for fan engagement, then attachment, then ultimately loyalty. It is also the basis for interest from broadcast networks, advertisers, and sponsors.

Analysis shows expanding leagues and rising fan engagement; Deloitte estimates that elite women's sports are generating roughly US\$1.3B globally.

Case studies (WNBA, NWSL expansions, Women's World Cup host cities) show measurable tourism and local business lifts. One report from Front Office Sports about Kansas City estimated that in total, the city had made \$52.7 million from hosting women's pro soccer postseason matches over a four month stretch late last year.

The pro women's soccer team in Kansas City - the Current - saw a \$20 million dollar revenue swing after it opened its new stadium - the first-ever of its kind in North America, built specifically for a women's professional sports team.

A major economic injection will come from new media deals, such as the WNBA's \$200 million annual value agreement with ESPN, NBC, and Amazon, which takes effect in 2026. This deal more than triples the league's previous contract. It is projected that women's sports could generate at least \$2.5 billion in value for rights holders in the United States by 2030—which would be a 250 percent increase from the \$1 billion generated in 2024.

Women's sports are proving to be a place where brands want to invest to reach the audiences these athletes, teams and leagues deliver - demographically, for their purchasing power, and culturally as brands and consumers now recognize the power these women have to shape our society.

Studies show that sponsorships across women's sports grew 12% year-over-year, outpacing the 8% rise across men's pro leagues.

As female athletes continue to command the spotlight while league platforms grow and new categories find their footing in this exciting arena, brands have a unique opportunity to shape the future of women's athletics through authentic and scalable partnerships.

Companies and brands such as Amazon, Google, Gainbridge, Gatorade, Molson Coors, Coca-Cola, Skims, and dozens of others are getting in on the game - another intended pun!

Kate Milligan is a professional golfer from Norman, Oklahoma. collegiate career at Oklahoma where she set several tournament and career scoring records she turned professional in 2021 and eventually earned status on the LPGA Tour for 2024

Slide #18 - Economic Case: Why Women's Pro Sports Matter

All of this new and growing interest and attention has boosted the market values for each team and league. We are at a clear inflection point in women's pro sports where we are seeing this happen. The chart on this slide shows past and current market values for just a few women's professional sports teams in the U.S.

From a personal perspective, the team Marlene and I helped bring to and manage in Tulsa - the Shock - which now plays in Arlington, Texas as the Dallas Wings - has a current market value of around \$250 million dollars - which is a growth rate of more than 250% compared to the team's original purchase back in 2010.

National Women's Soccer League team expansion fees have increased dramatically in the last five years, from around \$2 million in 2020 to a record-setting \$110 million for the Denver franchise awarded earlier this year. Other fees in this period also rose significantly, with the teams in the Boston and the San Francisco Bay areas paying about \$50 million in 2023. Having spoken with representatives of the company that leads expansion negotiations on behalf of the NWSL, owners that are awarded franchises in the next round of that league's expansion are estimated to pay around \$150 million dollars - and that's just to get a team into the league - which doesn't include start-up costs, stadium builds, and first-year annual operating expenses.

Parker Goins is a professional soccer player who plays as a forward for Tampa Bay Sun FC in the USL Super League. A native of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, she is a three-time OSSAA state champion and played college soccer at Arkansas.

Slide #19 - Economic Case: Why Women's Pro Sports Matter

This next slide shows a list of some women's professional sports leagues that have been launched over the past few years. This helps illustrate the fact that there are many industry leaders, owners and operators that are confident that women's pro sports are viable, will continue to grow, and are worth investing in.

Granted, some may not make it. And the reasons for why pro sports teams and/or leagues fail are vast and varied - and it will be no different in the case of women's pro sports teams and leagues. But there are plenty of examples of failed men's pro sports teams and leagues in our nation's history. There is risk in every business venture. But the point is that sports business professionals and financial firms now see women's sports as an industry in which they are willing to take that risk - which has not been the case to this level in the past. And that is a good sign.

Micha Hancock is a volleyball player from Edmond, Oklahoma. She is a left-handed setter who led Penn State to two national championships and was named the AVCA Player of the Year in 2014, current member of the LOVB team in Houston.

Slide #20 - Economic Case: Why Women's Pro Sports Matter

In terms of what a professional women's sports team may do for a local community's economy...this next slide shows a simple economic impact case model for a tier two pro soccer team playing in a suburban market in northeast Oklahoma.

It's an annual model, and its basic assumptions are:

- The team hosts 15 home games, with an average attendance of 2,500
- Tickets are an average of \$25 each
- Each fan spends an additional \$15 at the stadium (food, drinks, merchandise, parking, etc.)
- 10% of the fans are tourists - from out of town or state - they traveled to go to the games
- Each of those fans spend about \$200 in the market while there - hotel room, gas, food, shopping, etc.
- And 60% of that local capture, or local spend, stays in the market
- The team's payroll is \$2 million
- And it cost the team about \$300,000 to operate and maintain its stadium
- It uses a 1.8% economic output multiplier
 - Total seasonal attendance: $2,500 \times 15 = 37,500$ fans
 - Ticket revenue (annual): $2,500 \times \$25 \times 15 = \$937,500$
 - In-stadium spending (food/merch/parking): $2,500 \times \$15 \times 15 = \$562,500$
 - Tourist visits assumed: 10% of attendees = 250 tourists/game $\rightarrow 250 \times 15 = 3,750$ tourist-visits
 - Total tourist spend (off-site): $3,750 \times \$200 = \$750,000$
 - of that, local capture (share that stays in the local economy) assumed at 60% $\rightarrow \$450,000$ local tourist spend
 - Team payroll (assumed): \$2,000,000 (annual)
 - Stadium annual operations & maintenance (assumed): \$300,000

Direct local spending (sum of above):

- $\$937,500$ (tickets) + $\$562,500$ (in-stadium) + $\$450,000$ (local portion of tourist spend) + $\$2,000,000$ (payroll) + $\$300,000$ (stadium ops) = $\$4,250,000$
- Total economic output (with multiplier 1.8):
- $\$4,250,000 \times 1.8 = \$7,650,000$
- Estimated jobs supported:
- Using \$85,000 output per job (conservative local average), jobs $\approx \$7,650,000 / \$85,000 \approx 90$ jobs supported (FTE equivalent)
- Estimated annual sales-tax revenue (illustrative):
- Taxable spending (assumed): 60% of (in-stadium spending + local tourist spend)
- $= 0.6 \times (\$562,500 + \$450,000) = \$612,500$ taxable base
- At 6% combined sales tax $\rightarrow \$36,450$ in sales tax collected (approximate)

Per-game averages (useful for short-run planning)

- Per-game attendance: 2,500
- Per-game ticket revenue: $2,500 \times \$25 = \$62,500$
- Per-game in-stadium spend: $2,500 \times \$15 = \$25,000$
- Per-game tourist local spend: $250 \text{ tourists} \times \$200 \times 0.60 \text{ capture} = \$30,000$ local retained
- Per-game direct local spending (ex payroll & ops): $\$62,500 + \$25,000 + \$30,000 = \$117,500$
- Multiply per-game spending by 15 to recover season totals above.

I used these to keep estimates conservative; and more accurate local data (tax rates, rebates and incentives, etc.) would of course revise these estimated figures.

It's worth noting that what is not included in this model, which are items like:

- Any one-time stadium construction impact
- Any Broadcast/media rights, sponsorship valuations, or league-level revenues distributed to the team
- Or any spillover from long-term effects (such as increased youth sport participation leading to long-term health savings or productivity gains)

Yazmeen Ryan is an American professional soccer player who plays as a forward or a midfielder for the Houston Dash of the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL). She grew up in Norman, Oklahoma, and attended Norman North High School. She played for the club team Oklahoma Celtic. As a freshman, she led Norman North to their first-ever girls

soccer state championship. Yazmeen also played for Oklahoma City FC for 4 years. OKC FC is a team in the Women's Premier Soccer League (WPSL) - which is headquartered right here in OKC. The WPSL is the largest women's pro soccer league in the world with 130 teams competing in 33 states.

Slide #21 - Social Economic ROI

Beyond just these kinds of facts and figures relating to the cold economic benefits that are realized from having women's pro sports, communities within which women's pro sports teams call home will see a return on investment in these organizations from things like:

- Increased interest from companies that may want to start up or relocate to the market based on alignment with company values and/or quality of life considerations for their employees and their families
- In increase in the overall health of girls and women inspired by the local pro team (or teams) to take up the sport, or become more physically active and health conscious, or participate in team-sponsored health initiatives - and this may in turn generate health care savings in the market used to treat women with chronic health conditions like heart disease, lung disease, or poor mental health.
- Spawning civic pride that boosts girls' youth sports participation rates that then injects money into the local economy supporting small businesses like youth sports teams and organizations, sports equipment and uniform sales, gym memberships, and restaurant sales
 - We took our sons to get donuts every morning after practice and to eat lunch at a local restaurant after every game!
- And we know from the first section of this presentation that girls that play sports learn valuable lessons and life skills that help them further their education and eventually obtain higher-paying jobs that feed into the local economy from income taxes and local spending because they have the income to do it.
- Research shows that the presence of a women's professional sports team can increase earnings for local women in the spectator sports industry by 20–30%, helping to close the gender wage gap.

Jenna Hessert is a pickleball professional who resides in Oklahoma City, OK. Originally from Pennsylvania, she attended Yale University where she ran on their Division I track team while earning her B.S. in geology and geophysics. Jenna went pro in 2022 and won her first pro medal in 2023 in singles.

Slide #22 - Summary & Next Steps

We strongly believe that parity/equity of language and opportunity in state programs and policies is a “no-brainer” for promoting support for, and protection of girls and women in sports, and to feed its continued expansion.

- Sports for girls and women have great health and wellness benefits for them individually and for community and society-at-large
- Girls and women that play sports are proven to develop beneficial life-long skills and thus they make positive social and economic impact contributions to the communities in which they work and live
- Women's professional sports are now viable sports entertainment products that fans love, support and enjoy, and thus sponsors are clamoring to affiliate with them via investments in corporate partnerships
- The value of women's pro sports teams and leagues are rising at record pace and the trend is projected to increase in the future
- Oklahoma should want to, and should take action to make a commitment to lead the way in supporting and promoting girls and women in sports - because it's not only the right thing to do, it's the best thing to do for business.

Thank you all for this honor and opportunity to be with you here today to discuss such an important topic for our state, and nation.

And now we will be happy to answer your questions.