

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

**Written Testimony Unfavorable to HB0757:
Education – Interscholastic and Intramural Teams and Sports – Designation Based
on Biological Sex (Save Women’s Sports Act)**

Delegate Atterbeary, Chair, Delegate Washington, Vice-Chair, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Hannah Tralka (she/they). I am member of the LGBTQ+ community and an LGBTQ+ health researcher. I submit this unfavorable testimony today for HB0757. This dangerous and unjust legislation would require interscholastic and intramural athletic teams or sports in public and private schools be expressly designated based on biological sex. **I fully oppose HB0757, and ask for an unfavorable report from the committee.**

Both from a personal perspective, as an LGBTQ+ person, and as a researcher well-versed in LGBTQ+ health and mental health, the harm of this bill is clear. Below are some important considerations:

- 1) This bill relies upon misinformation and a complete lack of medical knowledge regarding gender and sex, teens, and hormonal transition.
- 2) The exclusion of trans women from sports would be a detriment to women’s sports, harming everyone (cisgender and transgender people). Laws that target and exclude trans athletes inherently encourage gender policing, imposing arbitrary rules about who is “woman” or “man” enough to play. Biological sex markers do not determine someone’s gender. Many cisgender women have physical bodies or hormone levels that would not be considered “typical” of their sex assigned at birth. “Sex testing” is arbitrary, invasive, and drives women away from participating in sports. No one should have to “prove” that they are “women enough” through invasive testing to play a sport ([FreeState Justice](#)).
- 3) The bill refers to the Olympic Committees guidelines re: hormones and trans athletes - which we all know is in the process of being changed. Using these changing, old guidelines is misguided and no longer applicable.
- 4) Trans girls are girls. Excluding trans girls from sports aligning with their gender identity is harmful and transphobic. The harm of transphobia, especially for youth, is well-researched and demonstrated; this discrimination leads to negative mental and physical health outcomes, including suicide. However, a supportive and safe environment can [significantly reduce these risks](#). Schools are one of the main environments for youth. This bill directly threatens the safe environment necessary to reduce these risks and instead causes risk. School sports should instead foster inclusivity, teamwork, and non-discrimination, as all youth require the [support and acceptance of their family, peers, and communities](#) to thrive.

5) The bill completely ignores the [WPATH Standards of Care](#). Please refer to the existing standards of care for trans people, established by professionals in this field.

6) I think back to myself, as a young teen, having to face this transphobic environment- on top of all of the other horrors of navigating school as an LGBTQ+ person and I do not think I would have lived past high school. Please think about the message you are sending to ALL girls if you tell them they are not “feminine” or “woman” enough to be able to play a sport that they love with their peers. Imagine if you were told you weren’t allowed to be yourself and exist as a student.

This bill is directly discriminatory, harmful, and unequitable. It will cause lasting mental and physical health damage for ALL students, especially trans girls.

Out of consideration for the mental and physical health, as well as the equitable treatment of transgender and nonbinary students in the state of Maryland, **I urge you to issue an unfavorable report for HB0370: Education – Interscholastic and Intramural Teams and Sports – Designation Based on Biological Sex (Save Women’s Sports Act).**

Sincerely,

Hannah Tralka
District 1, College Park