

TESTIMONY AGAINST

Testimony to the Ways and Means Committee

In opposition to

House Bill 757: Education – Interscholastic and Intramural Teams and Sports – Designation Based on Biological Sex (Save Women’s Sports Act)

February 24, 2022

Strong Schools Maryland strongly urges an unfavorable vote on House Bill 757: Education – Interscholastic and Intramural Teams and Sports – Designation Based on Biological Sex (Save Women’s Sports Act).

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future simply does not envision a transphobic system of public schools in the state. In fact, the oppressive hatred, bullying, and violence that would come about as a direct response to the passage of this bill would threaten any hope Marylanders have ever had about our schools being deemed “world-class”, in any sense of the word. The bill displays a dangerous obsession with the developing, pubescent bodies of children and should be rejected by the entire General Assembly.

House Bill 757:

- Includes a wholly inaccurate preamble that conflates pseudo-biology, gender with sex, demeans the inherent capacity of women, and speaks to “[i]nherent differences between men and women” taken out of context of old legal rulings and articles from blogs like Psychology Today.
- Advances a tired and failed “separate but equal” narrative around participation in and designation of school-based student extracurricular activities.
- Forces schools to develop student athletic teams on the basis of sex, then prohibits government entities from receiving complaints about discrimination arising from this requirement; seeks to force children into an either-or binary that is inconsistent with the experiences of ever-increasing numbers of students across the state.
- Protects students and schools that discriminate against student participation on the athletic team of their choosing from retaliation or civil action; thereby codifying the legal ability to discriminate against anyone who violates this arbitrary, flawed rule about athletic participation.

There is no imminent threat to women’s sports, though the passage of this bill would contribute to active threats to the lives of transgender and gendernonconforming Marylanders, especially to the physical and emotional safety of children. Nationally, 80% transgender students have said they avoided bathrooms at school, 70% avoid school locker rooms, and 60% avoid participating in physical education classes, all due to safety concerns. If we care about “saving sports” or “fair play”, Maryland ought to pursue athletic policies that are inclusive of trans students, which can have major benefits for transgender students and enrich the experiences of cisgender students.

Strong Schools Maryland works to build power with directly impacted Marylanders—including a diverse range of parents in every corner of the state—to ensure we can collectively shape the world-class system of education we’re stringing for. House Bill 757 will only hold us back as we set out to create world-class school for *all* students. Therefore, we strongly urge an unfavorable report on the bill.

If you have questions or requests for additional information, you can email:

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