

HB0757

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

Testimony to **OPPOSE**

Submitted by Wendy McDermott, 7011 Bellona Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21212

Dear Honorable Delegates,

To begin, I will make it clear that I am a cis-gendered middle aged white woman who has played sports most of my life. I played basketball and ran track in high school and later, as an adult I played roller-derby in Baltimore. Admittedly, I would never have been called a “gifted” athlete and would never have been considered one with “God-given” talent. But what I lacked in innate athletic prowess I made up for by pushing myself, sheer brute force, craving improvement. Through literal blood, sweat and tears, I made Varsity and later the All Star teams. As any coach will tell you, success is built on hard work, determination and dedication to the craft that is your sport. I will add to that though, it was my teammates. My teammates were my teachers and my rivals. Sometimes vying for the same spot on the team, the competition both internal and external are the greatest forces. That’s what athletes. That is what *sport* is. We raise the bar for our team and for those that come after. Athletes never settle for good enough and wouldn’t think of letting teammates rest on any laurels. Without the background din of constant cheering and rivalry, a sport is just a hobby.

I have had the privilege to compete with and against transgender athletes. We pushed each other to improve ourselves and to improve the game. We got stronger and faster together. Those in favor of HB757 will argue that transgender athletes may have a physical advantage over cis-gendered woman like me. Despite the blatant insult that this is to all women athletes, and despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, I will address this point *in arguendo*. I competed with and against cis-gendered women who

were faster than me, taller than me, stronger than me, more nimble more athletic. This doesn't make the game less fair. It makes it a sport. It makes is an opportunity for all athletes grow. What would a game have been if everyone on the track had been a 5'4" skinny kid exactly like me? Sport is meant to be hard and our teammates and our competitors prepare us for it. I am stronger thanks to each and every athlete I competed with and against, cis-gendered and transgendered alike. And my success was their success.

Aside from the physical aspects of sport and of competition, there is an innate feeling of belonging and camaraderie. A primary purpose of Interscholastic and Intramural sports is to build relationships, community and even a family with a team. Athletes come together around a common love and common passion. Student-athletes from all walks of life bond over the love of the game. The track, the field, the court, the pitch- all provide student athletes a place of belonging and a place to shut everything else out for those glorious moments. For many trans-gendered students this may be their only place of true belonging. With their team there is a sense of joy and a presence of home and family. These sports don't just offer a place to place, but provide a place where those around you understand you. A place with other women.

Given the devastating statistics surrounding suicide amongst transgendered youth, particularly transgendered youth of color, taking away that safe place and that team is particularly tone deaf on the best of days, evil and hard-hearted on the worst.

The title of this bill is the "Save Women's Sport Act" as if the sponsors of this bill are demonstrating true concern and a dedication to protect women. Delegates Szeliga voted NO on HB 206 voicing opposition to increases the hours of early Voting Centers in Maryland - which would have largely impacted working mothers. She voted NO to HB 123 which would prohibit employers from asking about wage history, a move that has historically held women to a permanently lower pay scale. She also voted NO to HB 1002 - which would prohibit firearms on college campuses. These are just a few examples of why It is quite evident that HB 757 is not an effort to protect women or

students, but is a rather embarrassingly, thinly veiled attempt at mongering fear amongst her constituents.

Transgender girls are girls. Transgender women are women. They belong on the team.