

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 Jessica Fish (she/her), and I am a resident and parent in PG County. I submit this unfavorable testimony today for HB0757. I was incredibly dismayed that this proposed legislation was introduced this session. This bill is dangerous and is counter to the current scientific consensus on transgender youth’s participation in sports. Therefore, I fully opposed HB0757, and ask for an unfavorable report from the committee.

As a researcher, educator, and professor of Human Development and Family Science, I have dedicated my career to understanding how the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth shape their health and wellness across the life course. The science is unequivocal on the issues of sports participation and gender diverse youth: Transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse youth thrive in contexts that support and affirm their gender identity – this includes their participation in sports and other school activities that align with their gender identity.

Furthermore, arguments to protect girls’ sports are based on the flawed assumption that cisgender girls are harmed, or their athletic prospects diminished when transgender youth participate in sports activities that align with their gender identity. There is no verifiable evidence to support this claim, which is based in bias and misunderstanding.

I would highly recommend that your committee consider a recent policy brief outlining current scientific consensus regarding the importance of trans affirmative policies, which include trans youth’s participation in sport. This [Statement of the Evidence](#) was published by the Society for Research in Child Development, the leading international organization on advancing research in child development. The report synthesizes the current science on gender-affirming policies and the wellbeing of transgender youth, including the current research outlining the importance of transgender youth’s participation in sports that align with their gender identity.

As policymakers, I hope you consider scientific evidence when considering policy initiatives. If enacted, this bill will most certainly enact great harm to transgender and gender diverse young people in the state of Maryland and their families. I, therefore, cannot recommend more strongly that you issue an unfavorable report for HB0757 **Education – Interscholastic and Intramural Teams and Sports – Designation Based on Biological Sex (Save Women’s Sports Act).**

Sincerely,
Jessica Fish, PhD
Maryland’s 5th District, College Park