

Hello Chairperson Vanessa Atterbeary and Vice Chairperson Jheanelle Wilkins, Committee members and guests. My name is Sharon Blinder Hill. I am here to oppose House Bill 359. I have 2 children: one identifies as female and one identifies as transgender. Both attended Montgomery County Public Schools.

Interscholastic and Intramural Sports need to be available to All students. Requiring athletic teams to be based on biological sex is blatantly discriminatory, damaging to children's mental health and incredibly demeaning to their self-esteem. Transgender children are Not a problem; they are simply children who want to be accepted; encouraged to do their best in life, academics & sports.

Transgender people have participated in sports for a long time! The NCAA and the International Olympic Committee have allowed transgender athletes to participate on sports teams aligned with how they identify since 2004.

The American Psychological Association states that there is No evidence to support claims that allowing transgender student athletes to play on the team that fits their gender identity would impact the fairness of the sport. They vary in their athletic ability just the same as all students. Note that in February 2021, the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education issued a statement supporting transgender and nonbinary students' Full and Equal participation in all education programs & activities, including sports.

Evidence shows that adolescents who participate in sports have better grades, higher occupational aspirations and more self-esteem. All youth deserve to have complete access to sports. Banning transgender individuals from participating on teams based on their identity is the same as banning them from the sport entirely since their identity is how they exist in the world. Transgender youth suffer bullying, rejection and discrimination in all areas of their lives, including getting medical care. Sport participation helps to mitigate some of the harm that they experience from transphobic people.

Gender policing harms Everyone. It leads to invasive tests to "verify" biological sex, hormonal status, etc. Divisive policies undermine All teams. Let's promote inclusive, supportive policies which will improve students' well-being and team unity.

Vote NO to HB 359. Thank you.