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Subject: Opposition to Maryland House Bill 0047

Good afternoon Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Maryland House Bill 0047, which is currently under consideration. As a concerned resident of Maryland, I believe that this proposed legislation would have detrimental effects on transgender and non-binary youth.

I support the inclusion of transgender and non-binary children in sports programs that align with their gender identity across our state. As the discussion surrounding transgender rights continues, it is crucial to recognize the importance of allowing all kids, regardless of their gender identity, the opportunity to participate in sports.

First and foremost, it is essential to emphasize the benefits of sports participation for the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of children. Engaging in sports promotes a healthy lifestyle, teaches teamwork, discipline, and helps develop important life skills. Denying transgender and non-binary kids the opportunity to participate on teams that align with their gender identity may lead to feelings of exclusion, impacting their overall development and sense of belonging.

Moreover, numerous studies have shown that sports participation positively contributes to the mental health of children. For transgender and non-binary youth, who often face additional challenges related to identity and acceptance, sports can be a crucial outlet for self-expression, confidence building, and forming social connections. Inclusive sports environments can play a pivotal role in fostering a sense of community and acceptance among all children, regardless of their gender identity.

It is important to dispel myths and misconceptions surrounding the inclusion of transgender kids on teams that align with their gender identity. Many concerns raised are based on unfounded fears rather than evidence. Policies that actively exclude transgender children not only perpetuate stereotypes but also contribute to their marginalization.

I believe that our state should uphold values of equality, fairness, and inclusivity. Allowing transgender kids to participate in sports not only aligns with these values but also contributes to a more compassionate and understanding society. By embracing diversity, we create environments where every child can thrive, fostering a sense of unity and acceptance.

I urge you to consider the positive impact of inclusive sports policies on the lives of transgender and non-binary children. Your support for their right to participate in sports will not only benefit them individually but also contribute to a more inclusive and compassionate community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge you to join me in my opposition of HB0047.

Sincerely,



Francoise Sullivan