

February 17, 2022

Honorable Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, MD 21401

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB515 Inclusive Athletic Attire Act

Dear Chair Vanessa Atterbeary and House Ways and Means Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB515 entitled Inclusive Athletic Attire Act.

My name is Yasmeen Elkoshairi, and I am 19 years old. Ever since I was a young girl, playing sports has been one of my biggest passions. The excitement of winning games, celebrating with teammates and being part of something bigger than yourself is not something that is replaceable by anything else. Sports are also a big part of a child's upbringing and teaches many irreplaceable lessons. The fact that these experiences could be denied from a child because of their religious choices is beyond unfair and disgusting. I am a hijabi myself as you can see, and I have played soccer for years. I've played club soccer, varsity soccer, academy soccer, and am now in the process of playing for a semi professional team. And in all my years of playing, I have never had a problem with uniforming due to the fact that there is no inconvenience as long as the colors match. Covering up and wearing a headscarf is a difficult decision, so the fact that this decision could become a sort of punishment is demeaning and shows no empathy for the struggles hijabis already have to go through. I believe that if there is no conflict with the colors in the uniform, there should be no restrictions on what an athlete has to wear. We are too advanced of a society to disallow children to play because of their clothing and religious choices.

I respectfully urge your vote in favor of it. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Yasmeen Elkoshairi
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