

## **Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee**

Senate Bill 588, "Fairness in Girls' Sports Act"

Position: Favorable

March 5, 2025

Dear Member of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

My name is Amie Ichikawa. I am an ambassador for Independent Women and the founder of Woman II Woman, a support group for incarcerated women, and I urge you to support Maryland Senate Bill 588, the Fairness in Girls' Sports Act.

I served nearly five years in the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, one of the largest women's prisons in the country. During that time, I personally experienced how vital it is to have single-sex spaces for the safety, privacy, and rehabilitation of incarcerated women. When California passed Senate Bill 132—the so-called "Transgender Respect, Agency, and Dignity Act"—in 2020, it allowed male inmates to transfer into women's prisons, even if they had not undergone any "gender-affirming" treatment. I began receiving desperate calls, letters, and emails from women still in prison, begging for help as men were being placed in their cells and their lives were turned upside down.

Women in prison already live in conditions where privacy is almost nonexistent. Now, they are being forced to share small, overcrowded spaces with men, including those with violent criminal histories and no intention of transitioning. These are not hypothetical concerns. I know of a male inmate who was isolated in a men's prison for assaulting his bunkmates but was transferred directly into a women's general population cell with seven women.

The Fairness in Girls' Sports Act is a necessary first step to protect women and girls in Maryland. Without clear protections, policies that prioritize ideology over reality will continue to endanger the safety, privacy, and rights of women.

We all want to ensure the rights of all are protected, but when men invade women's spaces, like prisons or sports, women are disproportionately harmed and their rights are discarded in the name of inclusion. You can be both for equality and single-sex sports.

This issue is deeply personal for me. I know what it's like to live in a cell where privacy is a luxury and safety is a constant concern. I know the fear of being unable to escape, of not being listened to when you ask for help. But I also

know the importance of standing up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

This is why it is necessary to pass the Fairness in Girls' Sports Act to ensure a level playing field for girls' sports.

I urge this committee to pass Senate Bill 588, and I urge it to include protections at the collegiate level to protect women's rights and restore fairness and safety for all female athletes.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Amie Ichikawa  
*Ambassador*  
*Independent Women*