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## *The Maryland House of Delegates* ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### **Testimony in Support of HB156 – Fairness in Girls’ Sports**

This bill ensures that high school junior varsity and varsity girls’ sports teams are exclusively designated for biological girls, thereby safeguarding fairness, promoting safety, and upholding the integrity of women’s sports.

#### **Why Is HB156 Necessary?**

Public opinion is overwhelmingly clear: Americans and Marylanders alike believe in fairness for girls in sports. A recent poll by The New York Times revealed that 79% of respondents nationwide think boys should not compete in girls’ sports. Closer to home, the January 2025 Gonzales poll showed that 76% of Marylanders—including 83% of African Americans—support HB156. Across all demographics, this bill has majority support. The Gonzales Poll is included in the testimony.

The reason for this broad consensus is simple: biological differences matter in competitive sports. Boys and girls are biologically distinct. Scientific research confirms that boys, on average, have greater muscle mass, bone density, and speed. These differences give them inherent physical advantages in sports, making competition against girls fundamentally unfair. Believe Science.

#### **The Safety and Well-being of Our Daughters Are at Stake**

Parents go to extraordinary lengths to protect their children on the playing field. From helmets and shin guards to mouthguards and padding, every piece of gear is designed to minimize risk and safeguard our kids. However, no amount of equipment can account for the dangers posed when biological boys compete against girls.

In March 2024, a high school girls’ basketball team in Massachusetts forfeited a game after a transgender-identified male player on the opposing team injured multiple female players. This isn’t just about fairness—it’s about safety. We must not put our daughters in harm’s way by asking them to compete against stronger and faster athletes due to biological differences that begin in the womb.

In 2023, a female field hockey player had her teeth knocked out and significant facial injuries when a transgender-identifying boy hit her in the face with the ball. As reported in

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the local newspaper from this incident, “‘The shrieks and screams of fear and pain that projected from her after being hit filled the stadium,’ Bain said. ‘The looks of horror and shock on the faces of the girls surrounding her were chilling. Following the incident, my team-mates were sobbing, not only in fear for their team-mate but in fear that they had to go back out on to the field and continue a game against a male athlete who had hospitalized one of our own. This traumatic event sheds light on the rules and regulations of male athletes participating in women’s sports.’ Addressing parents, Bill Runey, the superintendent of the school, said: ‘Seeing the horror in the eyes of our players and coaches upon greeting their bus is evidence to me that there has to be a renewed approach by the MIAA to protect the safety of our athletes.’”

Let’s not wait for a high school girl in Maryland to be injured before action is taken. Unfortunately, the number of girls facing injuries is growing.

### **Fairness Is a Fundamental Principle**

Title IX was enacted to create opportunities for women and girls in sports. Allowing biological boys to compete in girls’ sports undermines our progress. Girls deserve their own space to compete, excel, and win on a level playing field.

The rules and equipment are different for boys’ and girls’ sports. The volleyball net is lower for girls, the rules and equipment are different in lacrosse, and the basketball is smaller for girls, are a few examples.

Every Maryland girl deserves to experience the joy of competition, the thrill of victory, and the lessons of teamwork—without being disadvantaged by unfair competition.

The Save Women’s Sports movement has gained widespread support from organizations such as the Women’s Liberation Front (WOLF), Independent Women’s Forum, the Independent Council on Women’s Sports (ICONS), and others fighting to safeguard fairness and opportunity in women’s athletics. This effort is part of a nationwide movement, with nearly every state introducing similar legislation and at least 24 states successfully passing laws to ensure fairness in K-12 and collegiate sports. The movement celebrates very diverse bipartisan support across the country.

The Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act was passed by the US House of Representatives in a bipartisan vote earlier this month.

This is NOT a partisan issue. It’s common sense. I respectfully urge you to vote FAVORABLY on HB156. Let’s ensure fairness, safety, and opportunity for every girl in Maryland.

**Silencing the Public Undermines Democracy and Equity**

The Ways and Means Committee’s new “sponsor-only” testimony policy is a disservice to the democratic process. HB 156, like any other bill, deserves open debate and input from both supporters and opponents. Shutting out public voices is not just wrong—it’s a betrayal of our responsibility as lawmakers. We are here to represent the people, which means listening to them.

Shockingly, the committee is now less accessible than during COVID, when remote testimony opened doors for more citizens to be heard. This new policy silences the very people we were elected to represent.

Let’s not forget that new members have joined the committee, and the facts surrounding bills can shift. Public testimony provides critical insights and ensures decisions are based on the most current and diverse perspectives.

Yet, the rules are inconsistent. The Chair’s Internet Gaming Bill passed the House last year and is not restricted to sponsor-only testimony. Why the double standard? The rules should be equitable, not selectively applied to silence some and favor others.

Democracy thrives in the light of transparency and openness. Let us not dim that light. Let us commit to restoring fairness, changing this policy, and ensuring that every voice in Maryland has the opportunity to be heard. Democracy dies in darkness.