



HB156 Education - Interscholastic and Intramural Junior Varsity and Varsity Teams - Designation Based on Sex (Fairness in Girls' Sports Act)

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

WAYS AND MEANS

OPPOSE

Our names are Julien Halleman, Noah Gordon, Olivia Chin, and Dhru Nahan, and we are students of Anne Arundel County and executive team members of the Chesapeake Regional Association of Student Councils (CRASC). We are writing in opposition of HB156 Education - Interscholastic and Intramural Junior Varsity and Varsity Teams - Designation Based on Sex (Fairness in Girls' Sports Act). If passed, this bill would require public and certain nonpublic high schools in Maryland to designate sports teams based on biological sex. It prohibits transgender female (biologically male) students from participating in female-designated sports and protects schools from penalties for maintaining separate teams. The bill allows students and schools to take legal action if they experience harm due to violations and provides for monetary damages and other relief.

High school is one of the most important times in shaping students into adults. Connections are made, both the brains and bodies of students are developed, and most importantly, teens learn what truly defines them. For transgender students, this bill would significantly hinder their ability to achieve these fundamental goals of high school. It discriminates against their right to realize their true selves and accomplishes nothing other than harming the lives of transgender students in Maryland. By preventing these students from playing sports that align with their gender identities, the bill will likely exacerbate feelings of isolation and worsen the mental health challenges that transgender students already face in their difficult journeys of self-discovery.

Transgender women who undergo testosterone suppression retain very little advantage over their female peers in sports. Thus, the argument that they pose a significant danger is not only a crude demonization of transgender women but is also supported by minimal credible evidence. This narrative disregards the rigorous medical and regulatory guidelines already in place for transgender athletes and perpetuates harmful stereotypes that fuel misinformation and exclusion. Many transgender students no longer feel as though they belong within their biological sex, and this bill would legally bar them from participating in activities that align with their gender identity.

Finally, there are significant legal and ethical concerns surrounding the potential consequences of this bill, which in determining an athlete's biological sex could lead to invasive privacy violations. Additionally, courts have increasingly recognized that transgender participation in sports is protected under Title IX, which prohibits sex-based discrimination in federally funded education programs—protections that apply to high schools in Maryland.

The CRASC Legislative Department refers back to the following relevant clauses of the CRASC Platform:

- *CRASC Opposes...* Discrimination of any form based on race, sex, age, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or socioeconomic status; (Plank 10, Clause A)
- *CRASC Supports...* Promotion of a safe and inclusive school environment; (Plank 5, Clause D)

Accordingly, CRASC respectfully requests a **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on HB156.

Respectfully Submitted,

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