

## **HB 156 OPPOSE**

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## **HB 156 OPPOSE**

### **Education – Interscholastic and Intramural Junior Varsity and Varsity Teams – Designation Based on Sex (Fairness in Girls' Sports Act)**

House of Delegates, Ways and Means Committee

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

My name is Kellen Sweeney. I live in Baltimore City with my spouse and four year old child, who will start Kindergarten in Baltimore City this fall.

I benefited enormously from the ability to participate in junior varsity and varsity sports when I was in high school. I learned a lot about hard work, perseverance, and team work. Importantly, I was given the opportunity to play on a “boys” team, as someone assigned female at birth. To me, this was not about winning or losing – it was just about being able to play a sport I love, on the same team as my best friends, with coaches/teachers I respected and who wanted to give me an opportunity to grow as a person. The guys and coaches were all incredibly supportive – there was not a single objection to my participation.

Under this bill, I would not have had that opportunity. No one was harmed. I benefited tremendously. I oppose the Maryland legislature unilaterally taking away that opportunity from kids and communities.

I also played girls' sports. While we did not have any trans girls on the team, I am confident we would have welcomed one, and that no one on my squad would have objected to a trans girl on an opposing team. We were there to learn important values of hard work and teamwork and doing our best. And we were no strangers to opponents with clear competitive advantages – but those had nothing to do with individuals assigned male at birth. There was the occasional player that just ran circles around us, because they were incredibly gifted and/or had access to individual training above what we had. Our high school had a swimmer who went on to be an Olympian; no one else in our league could beat her. Are we going to ban everyone who is exceptional at their sport in the name of “fairness”? Of course not. That's not the point of school sports.

I want my child to have an opportunity to play with their friends. All of the parents I know want the same. I want them to not have to experience seeing a friend banned from the team over an arbitrary rule from the legislature that took that decision away from the local school and community. I urge you to oppose this bill.