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## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 50

Education - Interscholastic and Intramural Junior Varsity and Varsity Teams and Sports -  
Designation (Fairness in Girls' Sports Act)  
*Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee*  
February 18, 2026

**Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly opposes SB 50**, which would establish rules for school athletic programs that would exclude transgender girls from participating in sports based on biological sex. This proposal and its enforcement open the door for adults to question and investigate the legitimacy of a child's body to determine which sports team they may participate in. **SWASC strongly urges an unfavorable report on SB 50 due to the immense harm it will cause.**

**As cisgender female former athletes within our coalition** – including a former University of Maryland collegiate lacrosse player and athletes who competed four years of varsity sports on Baltimore County high school teams – we reject the notion that exclusionary policies like SB 50 are necessary to preserve competitive integrity, or that “fairness” is the venerated goal of sports that should be mantled above all else.

**SB 50 will require invasions of privacy without addressing any credible concerns over safety or fairness.** Studies have found no scientific evidence to support efforts like SB 50 – to ban transgender women in sports – for safety reasons.<sup>1</sup> Neither does the evidence support claims of a widespread fairness problem in girls' sports. A February 2026 systematic review of 52 studies with 6485 participants in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* found that after one to three years of hormone therapy, transgender women had no statistically significant differences in upper and lower body strength or aerobic capacity when compared to cisgender women; they retained only slightly higher lean muscle mass. The authors concluded that current data does not justify blanket bans.<sup>2</sup> Further, SB 50 targets a small population of students, as transgender youth make up an extremely small percentage of athletes. The NCAA reports fewer than 10 openly transgender athletes participating in college athletics, representing just 0.002% of the 510,000 student athletes.<sup>3</sup> If legitimate safety or fairness concerns arise in any sport, they are addressed through sport-specific safety rules, coaching standards, and regulatory oversight – not through categorical exclusion of a small and vulnerable group of students or athletes.

**Competitive youth sports are not fundamentally about winning: they are formative experiences designed to build teamwork, communication, perseverance, resilience, and respect for individuals with whom we may differ** – all central skills for adolescent development. Research consistently shows that sports participation is associated with improved academic outcomes, mental health, and social development for youth.<sup>4</sup> While this bill claims to be in the interest of competitive fairness, it seeks this ideal at the expense

of these crucial elements of sports participation. SB 50 would undermine the goals of school sports, putting the health of transgender and gender nonconforming students on the line. Furthermore, analyses of state athletic participation data indicate that policies allowing transgender participation have not reduced girls' sports participation and, in some cases, participation rates among girls have continued to rise.<sup>5</sup>

**Inclusive school environments and extracurricular policies, are associated with improved mental health outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth**, including lower rates of suicide ideation and stronger feelings of school belonging and safety.<sup>6</sup> Participation in athletics has also been linked to improved psychological well-being and academic engagement among transgender youth.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, policies that single out transgender youth risk contributing to psychological harm, social isolation, and stigma during a critical developmental stage. Protecting girls' sports should not come at the cost of marginalizing vulnerable adolescents. Competitive integrity is built not only on fairness, but on courage, inclusion, and respect for all students who step onto the field.

For these reasons, **Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly urges an unfavorable report on SB 50.**

*Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.*

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<sup>1</sup> Hamilton, B.R., Lima, G., Barrett, J. *et al.* Integrating Transwomen and Female Athletes with Differences of Sex Development (DSD) into Elite Competition: The FIMS 2021 Consensus Statement. *Sports Med* **51**, 1401–1415 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-021-01451-8>

<sup>2</sup> Mendes Sieczkowska, S., Caruso Mazzolani, B., Reis Coimbra, D., Longobardi, I., Rossilho Casale, A., da Hora, J. D., Roschel, H., & Gualano, B. (2026b). Body composition and physical fitness in transgender versus cisgender individuals: A systematic review with meta-analysis. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, *60*(3), 198-210. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2025-110239>

<sup>3</sup> The Hill. 2024. *NCAA President says there are less than 10 transgender athletes in college sports.* <https://thehill.com/homenews/lgbtq/5046662-ncaa-president-transgender-athletes-college-sports/>

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2023). *Youth Risk Behavior Survey*; see also Aspen Institute (2022). *State of Play Report* on youth sports participation and developmental outcomes.

<sup>5</sup> Inclusion analysis of participation data: Center for American Progress. (2021). *Fair Play: The Importance of Sports Participation for Transgender Youth.*

<sup>6</sup> GLSEN. (2021). *National School Climate Survey*

<sup>7</sup> The Trevor Project. (2023). *National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health.*