



# AMERICAN ATHEISTS

February 5, 2026

The Honorable Del. Jheanelle K. Wilkins  
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21404

**Re: OPPOSE HB 63, Intensifying Discrimination Against Young People**

Dear Chairperson Wilkins and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

American Atheists, on behalf of its over 1,500 constituents in Maryland, writes in opposition to HB 63, a controversial bill which would intensify discrimination against transgender students in Maryland's public school athletic programs.

American Atheists is a national civil rights organization that works to achieve religious equality for all Americans by protecting what Thomas Jefferson called the "wall of separation" between government and religion created by the First Amendment. We strive to create an environment where atheists are accepted as members of our nation's communities and where bigotry against our community is seen as abhorrent and unacceptable. We promote understanding of atheists through education, outreach, and community-building, and work to end the stigma associated with being an atheist in America. American Atheists supports efforts to protect the education, acceptance, and well-being of gender diverse students.

HB 63 is unnecessary and harms an already vulnerable population of young people. Supporters of this bill insist, without evidence, that the gender assigned at birth is necessary to ensure fairness in athletic competitions. However, by doing so, they are willing to sacrifice young people who already face a great deal of discrimination. This legislation would make transgender students far more susceptible to bullying and harassment in Maryland due to the state-mandated exclusion and opprobrium. The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey described the rampant bullying and harassment that transgender students already face, concluding that:

- Fifty-four percent (54%) of those who were out or perceived as transgender in K-12 were verbally harassed;

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- Twenty-four percent (24%) of those who were out or perceived as transgender in K-12 were physically attacked; and
- Seventeen percent (17%) of those who were out or perceived as transgender in left a K-12 school because the mistreatment was so bad.<sup>1</sup>

This bill stigmatizes trans kids and makes them more vulnerable to bullying and harassment. The overwhelming majority of trans kids, like most kids, do not play at elite levels. They just want to play everyday school sports and participate with their peers. Bans like HB 63 are not in the best interest of our students. When it comes to school sports, trans kids, like other students, deserve the same chance to learn teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, and self-discipline, and to build a sense of belonging with their peers. When we tell trans students that they cannot participate in sports with their classmates, they miss out on this important childhood experience and all the lessons it teaches. Every student deserves the opportunity to participate in sports and benefit from the lessons that come with that opportunity.

Maryland has a clear choice in this matter: Either choose to intensify the unnecessary victimization of a historically marginalized demographic of students or to foster empathy and diversity, and set a precedent of equality by rejecting HB 63. Interscholastic sports encourage teamwork, inclusivity, self-confidence, and determination amongst the students that participate, and thus, athletic opportunities should be equally available and encouraged for all students.

We urge you to protect young people in Maryland and repudiate discrimination against transgender students by rejecting this bill.

Should you have any questions regarding American Atheists' opposition to HB 63, please contact me at [vanderson@atheists.org](mailto:vanderson@atheists.org).

Sincerely,



Victoria Anderson  
State Policy Specialist  
American Atheists

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<sup>1</sup> Sandy E. Jame, Jody L. Herman, Susan Rankin, Mara Keisling, Lisa Mottet, & Ma'ayan Anafi, *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*, Nat'l Ctr. for Transgender Equality (2016).