



**The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists**
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

Office of the Rhode Island Section Chair
Beth Cronin, MD, FACOG

April 23, 2025

Dear Chair McNamara and Committee Members,

My name is Beth Cronin and I am a practicing Ob/Gyn in Providence, RI and the RI Section Chair for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. I submit this testimony in **strong opposition to H 5842**, known as the “Fairness in Women’s Sports Act.”

The RI Section of ACOG represents more than 140 physicians and partners in reproductive health care in our state. ACOG is a leading authority on reproductive health care and is committed to public policy based on facts and evidence-based medicine. ACOG believes that all people should have access to the full spectrum of comprehensive, evidence-based health care. Additionally, it is crucial that students and young adults can participate with their peers in sports and other school activities.

This bill invites any person to “dispute” a student’s gender, which would require the student to undergo an invasive examination of their “internal and external reproductive anatomy” and other testing to prove their sex. As an Ob/Gyn, the idea of subjecting a student to an exam of their “reproductive anatomy” for the purposes of sports participation is unconscionable and wrong. This bill will embolden spectators, community members and competitors to harass other students simply because they are larger, stronger or more skilled. This is a true set up for bullying and harassment and the subsequent consequences of this on adolescents. I strongly encourage you to vote against this bill and not allow this dangerous precedent to be set here in Rhode Island.

Educators know that transgender students, like any student, thrive when they are treated fairly and with respect. In 2010, the Rhode Island Department of Education adopted regulations protecting transgender students from discrimination — regulations that have recently been affirmed in the context of athletic participation. Participation in sports is a formative part of growing up for many students. There are so many lessons learned on and off the field/court/gym. All students, regardless of their gender identity deserve the same opportunities to learn teamwork, leadership and perseverance. We need to be doing what we can to encourage more young people to play sports, as it can be a strong baseline in developing lifelong healthy habits, rather than erecting barriers for girls by subjecting them to invasive exams or public ridicule for wanting to participate.

Rhode Island has a long history of protecting their residents, ensuring that transgender individuals have access to health care and equal protections. Rolling back rights for transgender Rhode Islanders goes against our values and history. House Bill 5842 is furthering the current national agenda, that is full of misinformation and aims to exclude and in many ways erase our transgender and gender diverse friends, neighbors, children and colleagues. Rhode Island knows better and should not threaten the health and

well-being of our young, most vulnerable students by considering this piece of legislation. Additionally, courts have found that bills that discriminate against transgender students violate both state and federal guarantees of equal protection under the law.

I strongly urge you to oppose this and any other legislation that seeks to strip rights and access to any Rhode Islander.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Cronin, MD".

Beth Cronin, MD
RI Section Chair, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Division Director, Division of General Obstetrics and Gynecology
Women & Infants Hospital