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Against House Bill No. 5842

I'm providing written testimony against H5842. Trans youth deserve to play sports in their community and with their friends. The fact that laws are being proposed so that an elementary-school-aged trans girl is being told she won't be able to play sports on the girls' team is preposterous. Do you hear what we're wasting our time with here? We are not talking about Olympic sports - we're talking about youth playing sports with friends and teammates. Laughing. Playing. Building relationships. Working through conflict. Becoming best friends.

Here are things that being a part of a team provides:

Develops Social Skills: Teamwork helps young people learn how to communicate effectively, cooperate, and resolve conflicts with others.

Builds Self-Esteem and Confidence: When young people contribute to a team and achieve goals together, it boosts their self-esteem and confidence

Teaches Responsibility and Accountability: Being part of a team teaches young people to be responsible for their actions and accountable to their teammates.

Promotes Teamwork and Collaboration: Teamwork helps young people understand the importance of working together towards a common goal and how to collaborate effectively.

Enhances Problem-Solving Skills: Working in a team requires young people to think critically, solve problems, and make decisions together.

Fosters Empathy and Understanding: Team settings expose young people to diverse perspectives, promoting empathy, tolerance, and an understanding of individual differences.

Creates a Sense of Belonging: Being part of a team gives young people a sense of belonging and connection, which is crucial for their social and emotional development.

Provides Leadership Opportunities: Team settings provide opportunities for young people to take on leadership roles, develop leadership skills, and learn how to motivate and inspire others.

The way our society is set up, sports are separated into the "boys' team" and the "girls' team". The only way for a youth to play sports (especially once they're in 3rd grade and up) is when they play within their gender. A trans girl is a girl, she should play on the "girls' team".

If a trans girl is not allowed to play on the "girls' team," the question arises of where she should play sports. Should she be placed on a team of people with whom she doesn't identify, such as a boys' team? This could potentially lead to bullying and ostracization, and create a situation where she feels she doesn't belong because she identifies as a girl. How do you explain this to an 8-year-old? A 10-year-old? A 12-year-old?

When a trans girl who loves sports, watches sports, and plays sports is not allowed to participate in playing sports on a team, what is she supposed to do? What is she supposed to think about herself? What happens to her self-esteem and confidence? How is she learning about teamwork and collaboration through something she loves? Tell me how she sees the

example of empathy and understanding? How does she create a sense of belonging when she wants to play, knows how to play, and isn't being allowed to play?

Let's get over ourselves and stop looking at children's genitals.

Don't pass H5842. Don't even consider it. Find the human being in you. What side of history are you on? What team are you on? Find your **social skills** and **confidence** to make the right choice, take **responsibility** for representing every single person in RI (not just people like you or who look like you), **collaborate** with your underserved community who is calling for your support, use your skills to **problem solve** and do the right thing for trans youth, find your **empathy** for trans kids who's lives are really hard especially being the target of so much hate right now, help the trans youth have the **sense of belonging** that they deserve, let these youth become **leaders** because someone believed in them. Let's have this be the winning team here in RI.