

Jennifer Lima  
H5842  
Oppose

I am writing today to urge you to reject H5842, the "Fairness in Women's Sports Act".

Transgender youth experience all kinds of mistreatment (such as harassment, harsher discipline, or physical or sexual assault) because of their gender identity. There are many very real challenges that face transgender youth, including mistreatment in schools, family rejection, threats of physical violence, and other discrimination. Anti-trans sports bans risk further marginalizing young people who already face tremendous challenges in school.

Just like all youth, athletes who are transgender will have varying degrees of physical ability. My daughter played high school basketball. Some days she was the strongest on the court, some days she wasn't. During those four years she received a broken nose, two concussions, multiple bumps and bruises and tore her ACL. All while competing against other players who, as far as I know, were also assigned female at birth. That's because when you play a contact sport, the risk of injury exists. Dominance and safety in athletics are not dictated by biology alone.

Sports can be life-changing for young people. There is ample evidence that an opportunity for adolescents to participate in sports results in positive outcomes, such as better grades, greater homework completion, higher educational and occupational aspirations, and improved self-esteem. No student should have to choose between being their authentic self and participating in this experience.

Please do not support this bill.

Please note that I am currently a member of the school committee in North Kingstown but I am writing as a citizen, not as a member of that body. Thank you.

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