

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I am a resident of East Providence and the parent of a public elementary school student here.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to H5842 the so-called "Fairness in Women's Sports Act." This act does not protect women or girls in any way.

All people should be able to participate in sports in a way that makes them feel welcome. That includes transgender students. I am a woman who competed in high school sports in Rhode Island and in college sports both in the U.S. and abroad. I am the mother of a daughter who plays multiple sports. I have no fear or objection to transgender girls competing in girls sports alongside me or my daughter. I am 5'2". My six foot tall college roommate had a distinct biological advantage over me on the volleyball court and we were both assigned female at birth.

I have much more fear and objection to my daughter someday having to prove her sex to compete in girls sports. This bill includes language that would allow people to dispute student athletes' sex and require those athletes to prove their sex by:

- The student's internal and external reproductive anatomy;
- The student's normal endogenously produced levels of testosterone; and
- An analysis of the student's genetic makeup.

Neither my child, nor myself, should have to have a physical examination of genitalia or a genetic test to prove our sex. This bill will open the door to abuse and discriminate against women. All it would take is someone accusing a girl of being transgender to get them banned from a sport or force them to prove their sex through invasive tests.

As a woman I do believe it is important to have spaces and activities that are focused on women, since our society is still heavily male dominated. Truly welcoming spaces include trans women and non-binary people because they are about being safe together, not about exclusion.

Please do not allow this bill to pass.

Thank you,

Libby Merrill  
East Providence