

Dear House Committee on Education,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony. I am a life long progressive Democrat, a supporter of Democrats For An Informed Approach To Gender and **I strongly support House bill 5842.**

Eligibility for participation in the female sports category must be based solely on sex, i.e., female reproductive biology and genetics. Inclusion of males in female sports violates women's and girls' fundamental right to equal opportunity in sports. This well-deserved right was enshrined in federal civil rights law under Title IX in 1972 which recognized the indisputable and immutable differences between males and females in athletic performance and remedied this disparity by establishing the right of females to sex-segregated sports in federally funded educational programs and activities.

More recently, scientific research on the physiological differences in athletic performance between males and females has only confirmed and added to our knowledge. We now understand:

- Males have overwhelming physiological strength, speed and aerobic advantages over females
- These physiological differences produce dramatic performance differences; the male-female performance gap ranges from 10% to more than 50%, depending on the sport.

- Significant male advantage is present at all ages and competition levels, even prior to puberty.
- Testosterone suppression and opposite-sex hormones do not meaningfully reduce the significant physiological advantages that males have compared to females.
- Female athletes have suffered serious and lasting physical harm from competing against males.

Some argue that there are so few trans-identifying males playing in female sports that protecting the female sports category is unnecessary. . However, the number of males playing in female sports is already considerable and will continue to grow. The impact of one male competing in a single female sports competition is not a 1:1 ratio. In addition to the female who is displaced by the male athlete, every other female on that team and the opposing team is affected and when that male athlete sets a record future female athletes are also impacted. A recent report by the Williams Institute estimates that there are at least 120,000 trans identifying students enrolled in federally funded schools.

The following has been documented by researchers at SheWon and HeCheated:

- At least 767 female athletes have lost 1,090 medals in 530 competitions across 40 different sports.

- There have been over 3,662 female sports events in which victories were won by males.
- There were over 6,363 top three finishes by males in these events.
- More than 11,866 events have been affected by males participating on female teams.
- Female athletes have lost over \$2,051,316 in prize money and scholarships and lost over 704 awards and honors to males competing in female sports.

Concern has been expressed that determining eligibility for the female sports category would require invasive procedures like “genital inspections.” Nothing could be further from the truth: a quick, noninvasive, once-in-a-lifetime cheek swab is all that is needed.

The most common objection, by far, is that sex segregated female sports would ban non-binary and trans-identifying people from sports. However, this simply is not the case; in addition to being able to participate on co-ed teams, males who claim a trans or non-binary identity are already eligible to participate in the male category. A recent United Nations report entitled *Violence Against Women And Girls In Sports*, drawing upon the research of several sports policy organizations, suggests changing the male sports category to an open category to accommodate the needs of all non-binary and trans identifying athletes.

In addition, it is important to note that a recent poll shows that 79% of all voters, and 67% of Democratic voters, believe that males should not compete on female sports teams.

I urge you to vote in favor of House bill 5842.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of the people of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Lisa Black