

House Bill No. 5842

To the House Committee on Education

My name is Matty Clark, I am a medical student at Brown University and I am submitting this testimony in firm opposition to House Bill No. 5842.

H. 5842 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. A blanket ban like H. 5842 emboldens spectators, community members, and fellow competitors to bully and harass girls simply because of their size, strength, skill, or other characteristics. It creates a barrier even to non-transgender girls playing sports and is unenforceable without violating the privacy rights of girls and young women.

Transgender students undergoing medical care like hormone therapy are doing so under the careful supervision of licensed physicians. Just like any other student receiving prescribed treatment, they deserve the right to participate fully in school activities, including sports. Denying them this opportunity not only singles them out unfairly but also undermines the principles of equality and inclusion that our schools stand for.

Too often, decisions in transgender medicine are driven more by fear of potential backlash than by solid scientific evidence. In an [article](#) by Dr. Josh Safer, an endocrinologist working in transgender medicine, he concludes that “There does not seem to be any reason to expect advantage for transgender people prior to puberty or for transgender people whose gender-affirming treatment begins at the onset of puberty. To date, the only established driver of athletic advantage in men over women is testosterone. Further, the existing literature suggests that treatment to lower testosterone may be sufficient to erase that advantage in at least some athletic activities”.

We all want to ensure a level playing field when it comes to youth sports. The truth is, every child is different in different ways. This is why some girls excel at gymnastics, others at volleyball, some at basketball, and others at soccer. Success in school sports is really about practice, self-discipline, access to good coaches and facilities, and even money to pay for outside training. The overwhelming majority of transgender youth, like most kids, don’t even play at elite levels. They just want to play everyday school sports and participate with their peers for the same reasons that other kids do: to be a part of a team where they feel like they belong. We shouldn’t exclude kids and prevent them from playing because they’re transgender.

We have to view H. 5842 in the context of a national campaign, fueled by disinformation, to take away the rights of transgender Americans to live freely and peacefully and which has accelerated exponentially under the current presidential administration. Anti-trans activists are seeking a broad exclusion of a vulnerable group of students with one-size-fits-all rules. I urge you to vote against this harmful and repressive ban on the small number of transgender student athletes in our state, and allow these kids to simply be kids.

Matty Clark, MSc