

April 22, 2025
Representative Joseph M. McNamara
Chair, House Committee on Education
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
RE: Letter of Opposition for HB5842

Chair McNamara,

I write to offer my opposition to HB5842: An Act Relating To Education -- Fairness In Women's Sports Act. There are a lot of things that are unfair in the world of women's sports: Among NCAA Division I schools, for every dollar spent on men's sports, only 40 cents go to women's programs, even though women make up a significant portion of the student body. Furthermore, according to the Women's Sports Foundation, girls have 1.13 million fewer high school sports opportunities than boys, and drop out of sports at a much higher rate. Female athletes also have far fewer opportunities to play professionally due to the lack of female leagues, low pay and unfair conditions. Regrettably, this bill addresses none of these persistent issues impacting female athletes. Instead, it makes an easy villain out of young trans women, who make up an infinitesimally small percentage of the female athletes in our country.

Bills like this have been filed in state legislatures across the country, each built on a foundation of myths about the physiology and performance abilities of transgender minors. But perhaps the greatest myth that this bill reinforces is the belief that every student joins a team because they want to win. After school sports are a great way to learn communication and teamwork skills, to get exercise, and even just to meet friends. This bill reduces all the things that make school sports worthwhile by suggesting that competition and winning is all that matters, the legislative equivalent of the overbearing parent yelling at their child when they miss a free throw.

I want all female athletes, both cisgender and transgender, to have access to state-of-the-art facilities, packed stadiums, and equal access to scholarships. Let's work together to address all of those issues instead of pushing forward a bill that will address none.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sabina Matos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sabina Matos
Lt. Governor of Rhode Island