

Jennifer Lima
H7727
Oppose

I am writing today to urge you to reject H7727, 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. During those four years she received a broken nose, two concussions and multiple bumps and bruises. That’s because when you play a contact sport, the risk of injury exists.

Transgender athletes have been competing openly for decades, with multiple state high school athletic associations, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and several professional and amateur sports leagues allowing transgender athletes to participate in accordance with their gender identity as early as 2004.

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.

Requiring transgender youth to athletically compete on teams based on their sex/gender assigned at birth is the same as banning them from athletic competition entirely. All youth should have access to the benefits of sports. 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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