



LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

Bill: **HB0359 Interscholastic and Intramural Junior Varsity and Varsity Teams and Sports Designation Save Women's Sports**

Organization: PFLAG Salisbury Inc., PO Box 5107, Salisbury Maryland 21802

Submitted by: Nicole Hollywood, President of the Board

Position: **OPPOSE**

SALISBURY PFLAG STRONGLY OPPOSES DISCRIMINATION IN SPORTS

I am submitting this testimony OPPOSING HB 0359 on behalf of PFLAG Salisbury, the Salisbury, Maryland Chapter of PFLAG National.

HB 0359 is a misguided bill rooted in transphobia that is simply not backed by the scientific research. Creating the narrative that trans feminine athletes are stronger than cis women athletes pushes false information, neglects what medical science tell us, and ignores the standards that are set for athletes across the board. Bills such as HB 0359 are being used as a way to discriminate against transgender Americans opening the door to the humiliating treatment of any, and all, youth who don't fit culturally-accepted gender norms.

According to the ACLU, "there is no one way for women's bodies to be. Women, including women who are transgender, intersex, or disabled, have a range of different physical characteristics. A person's sex is made up of multiple biological characteristics and they may not all align as typically male or female in a given person. Further, many people who are not trans can have hormones levels outside of the range considered typical of a cis person of their assigned sex."

Gender is a spectrum and not all individuals identify or present as male or female. Transgender people are our beloved friends and family, co-workers, neighbors, students, community members, children, and parents. Being transgender is not the whole of anyone's identity because gender identity is just one small piece of who one is as an individual.

Transgender athletes participate in sports for the same reasons as everyone else—to get and stay healthy, be part of a team, and build a sense of belonging with their peers. Many who oppose the inclusion of trans athletes erroneously claim that allowing trans athletes to compete will harm cisgender women but excluding transgender and gender non-conforming students hurts all students.

Denying transgender youth access to athletic programs is discrimination. It is regressive and unjust and not in line with our moniker as the Free State. If this bill passes it will be a form of state-censored intolerance and all those legislators who support this bill will be on the wrong side of history.

HB359 is discriminatory, not rooted in science, runs contrary to the purpose of youth sports, and is publicly opposed by all our nation's most renowned medical, psychological, and child development professional organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychological Association. PFLAG Salisbury Inc. strongly opposes this legislation and recommends an UNFAVORABLE report in committee.