

March 15, 2022

Honorable Senator Paul Pinsky
Chair, Senate Committee on Education, Health & Environment
Miller Senate Office Building, Room 2 West
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB951 Inclusive Athletic Attire Act

Dear Chair Pinsky and Education, Health & Environment Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB951 entitled Inclusive Athletic Attire Act.

My name is Yasmeen Elkoshairi. Ever since I was a young girl, playing sports has been one of my biggest passions. The excitement of winning games, celebrating with teammates, and being part of something bigger than yourself is not an experience that is replaceable by anything else. Sports are a big part of a person's upbringing and teach many irreplaceable lessons. The fact that these experiences could be denied to a child because of their religious choices is beyond unfair and disgusting. I am a hijabi myself as you can see, and I have played soccer for years. I've played club soccer, varsity soccer, academy soccer, and am now in the process of playing for a semi-professional team. And in all my years of playing, I have never had a problem with uniforming due to the fact that there is no inconvenience as long as the colors match. Covering up and wearing a headscarf is a difficult decision, so the fact that this decision could become a sort of punishment is demeaning and shows no empathy for the struggles hijabis already have to go through. I believe that if there is no conflict with the colors in the uniform, there should be no restrictions on what an athlete has to wear. We are too advanced of a society to disallow children to play because of their clothing and religious choices.

I respectfully urge your vote in favor of it. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Yasmeen Elkoshairi
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