

MARY BETH CAROZZA
Legislative District 38
Somerset, Wicomico,
and Worcester Counties

Education, Energy, and
the Environment Committee

Executive Nominations Committee



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 316
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3645 • 301-858-3645
800-492-7122 Ext. 3645
Fax 410-841-3006 • 301-858-3006
MaryBeth.Carozza@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
SB 381 – Education – Interscholastic and Intramural Junior Varsity and
Varsity Teams – Designation Based on Sex (Fairness in Girls’ Sports Act)
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and my distinguished colleagues on the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 381, the Fairness in Girls’ Sports Act. I want to thank Chair Feldman and his staff for all their efforts to make this an informative, productive hearing.

SB 381 would simply ensure a level playing field for girls’ sports where biological girls only (born female) compete against biological girls (born female), and the bill applies only to high school interscholastic and intramural junior varsity and varsity teams. I wholeheartedly believe this legislation is needed so female student athletes in Maryland can compete and earn scholarships, medals, and records on a fair field of play.

This bill protects the hard-earned opportunities for girls to compete in organized high school sports fairly, and to earn athletic awards and scholarships, just as I did as a student athlete. I played varsity high school tennis for four years at Stephen Decatur High School in the number one girls’ single position for four years.

By holding that position at the high school level, I then had opportunities to compete in regional and state tournaments that put me in the strongest position to be considered for a college athletic scholarship. As a result, I was offered and accepted a tennis scholarship to play for The Catholic University of America, a scholarship that was a lifeline for helping my family to pay for the cost of my college, where I played in the number three girls’ single position and number one girls’ doubles position for all four years.

Had one of the boys from the boys’ tennis team at my high school decided to play for my girls’ high school tennis team, I would have been displaced from the number one position on the girls’ tennis team and would have been denied opportunities to compete in state and regional tournaments, which are competitions that colleges follow when they are interested in recruiting student athletes and offering scholarships.

Simply put, being displaced from my number one girls’ tennis singles position would have denied my opportunity to earn a college tennis scholarship, after spending years of practice,

hours on end in the summer playing on the hard courts, running for miles, doing wind sprints, and competing in local, state, and regional tournaments.

My story and the story of thousands of Maryland women who played competitive sports in high school and earned a college athletic scholarship underscore the need for this legislation.

Women fought too long and too hard to earn equal athletic opportunities. In the early 20th century, women began fighting for their own spaces in sports, and through tremendous effort and hard-won accomplishments, we were able to enact Title IX on June 23, 1972, which was designed to eliminate discrimination against girls and women in education and athletics.

Before Title IX, only 294,000 girls played high school sports compared to 3.7 million boys. In 2019, 3.4 million girls participated in high school sports compared to 4.5 million boys. We have made immense progress, and we should not undermine that progress by allowing boys to take away the opportunities of girls by playing on girls' high school teams.

We have always acknowledged that there are differences between boys and girls. Boys have enjoyed the many benefits that come with participating in sports, from leadership, confidence, cooperation, conflict resolution and so much more. We cannot deny these benefits to girls, especially when girls who participate in sports are also less likely to get breast cancer, suffer depression, remain in a violent relationship, do drugs, get pregnant, and are more likely to graduate than girls who do not play sports.

In 2020, we celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, voting rights for women. Here we are today considering legislation to ensure that women have a fair playing field in sports. We should be allowed to preserve our history, keep our opportunities in girls' sports, and enjoy the many benefits that come from participating in sports.

I truly am grateful for this opportunity to present SB 381, and look forward to working with you in the future on ensuring that we keep fairness in girls' sports.