

Senate Bill 381
Education - Interscholastic and Intramural Junior Varsity and Varsity Teams - Designation
Based on Sex
February 7, 2024
Oppose

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and esteemed members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I, Riya Seth, a resident of District 5, write to express my firm opposition to SB 381. As a female athlete who has competed against both males and females throughout the past decade, I believe my unique perspective sheds light on the misguided nature of this legislation.

Having participated in wrestling on a boys' team during my middle and high school years, I have firsthand experience of the biological differences between genders. However, I must emphasize that the prevalent fear-mongering and transphobia surrounding this issue are not only unjustified but also counterproductive.

First and foremost, the number of transgender women actively participating in sports is minuscule. Throughout my years of wrestling, I never once encountered a transgender female athlete. Moreover, before puberty, the physiological disparities between boys and girls are negligible. The disproportionate fear of trans athletes dominating female sports is unwarranted and unjust.

Additionally, the exclusion of transgender athletes perpetuates discrimination against LGBT children, who are already vulnerable to mental health challenges and suicidal ideation. Instead of fostering an inclusive environment, this legislation exacerbates the marginalization of an already marginalized community.

It is crucial to recognize that this harmful act of exclusion does not benefit girls' sports in any meaningful way. As an advocate for women in sports, I have dedicated considerable effort to addressing genuine concerns such as sexual harassment protections and resource allocation for female athletes, particularly in male-dominated sports. I have been actively involved in Title IX protections and have even testified in Congress on these matters. These are the areas where genuine protection and support are urgently needed.

It is regrettable that amidst genuine issues facing female athletes, the focus remains disproportionately fixated on transphobia. This selective emphasis appears to be driven by ulterior motives, primarily to stoke culture wars and gain political mileage. Instead, let us

prioritize inclusivity, fairness, and genuine protection for all athletes, irrespective of their gender identity. Thank you for considering my testimony.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on SB381.