



State Representative Jena Powell

Ohio's 80th House District

HB 6 – The Save Women's Sports Act – Sponsor Testimony

Higher Education, March 8, 2023

Chairman Young, Vice Chair Dobos, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on the Save Women's Sports Act.

The Save Women's Sports Act is a fairness issue for women to be able to achieve their dreams in athletics in our state, and is crucial to preserving women's rights, and the integrity of women's and girls' sports.

Across our country, female athletes are currently losing championships, scholarship opportunities, medals, education and training opportunities, and more to discriminatory policies that allow biological males to compete in girls' sports.

While I could share dozens of different examples with you, one example is that in Connecticut, nine different girls used to hold the 15 women's state championship titles. In 2020, those 15 titles were all held by two different biological males.

All that girls are asking for is a fair shot, and to be given the chance to play and win by the rules in the sports that they love. That opportunity is being ripped from them by biological males.

The Save Women's Sports Act will ensure fairness in sports by requiring schools to designate separate teams for participants of the biological female sex if those schools participate in athletic competitions or events administered by an organization that regulates interscholastic athletic conferences or events. No school, interscholastic conference, or organization that regulates interscholastic athletics shall permit biological males to participate on an athletic team or in an athletic competition designated only for biological female participants.

The reason we have women's sports divisions is because biological males will always have physical and biological advantages over girls. Biological males possess many physiological advantages over females, including greater lung capacity, larger hearts, higher red blood cell counts, stronger tendons and ligaments, greater muscle strength, and increased bone density.

Title IX was enacted at the federal level, in recognition of these physiological differences and the need for equal opportunity for women and girls to compete in interscholastic sports.

Discriminatory policies violate Title IX and deny girls educational and athletic opportunities. Allowing biological males to compete against biological females is a discriminatory policy that turns back the clock over half-a-century on advances we have made for women.

Currently, OHSAA allows biological males to compete against biological females if they have either 1) completed a year of hormone therapy or 2) demonstrated that they do not possess physical or physiological advantages over biological females. Unfortunately, these policies have been enacted in other states and resulted in biological males winning in girls' sports. It is clear that these policies do not address the problem, and that protections are needed.

For the few individuals who are born intersex, their ability to compete will not be hindered in any way by this bill.

We want everyone in the state of Ohio to be able to compete. The beauty of this bill is that we are including everyone in sports, and upholding the integrity of women's sports.

I am passionate about this issue because we cannot allow girls' dreams of being a gold medal athlete to be crushed by biological males stealing their opportunities.

So far, 18 legislatures have responded to this inequality issue by passing and enacting the Save Women's Sports Act in their states.

The Save Women's Sports Act is a fairness issue for women. This bill ensures that every little girl who works hard to make it on a podium is not robbed of her chance by a biological male competing against her in a biological female sport. We want every little girl to achieve her athletic dream here in the state of Ohio.

We owe it to the women and girls in our state to make Ohio the 19th state to Save Women's Sports.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions from the Committee.