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I am writing to express my deep concern with 'An Act to Prohibit Biological Males from Participating in School Athletic Programs and Activities Designated for Females When State Funding Is Provided to the School.'

As a long-time participant in both team and individual sports, athletics has played a formative role in my life. When I look back at my school sports experience, I cannot remember a single result from those years with much clarity, despite the fact that I was regularly on top of podiums in cross-country ski races. What I do remember is the sense of self-worth, confidence, and the lasting friendships I developed. Many of the people I competed against and participated in sports with are my friends to this day, and have been a vital support system for me in adulthood.

I recognize concerns about fairness may arise when student-athletes compete in categories consistent with their gender identity. However, even if such fairness issues genuinely arise from elementary through college-level athletics—and these concerns vary significantly by sport—I firmly believe the broader benefits of participating in sports significantly outweigh strict adherence to this particular dimension of fairness.

The fact that fairness comes second fiddle to ensuring the safety, comfort, and respect of students is a value we already uphold. After all, it's unfair that socioeconomically advantaged students, with special access to sport-specific training and camps and nutrition, are allowed to compete in the same category as students without these advantages. Yet we would reject a proposal to separate sports teams along these lines. The reason, I take it, is that ensuring that students can experience the joys of sports together, and feel welcomed regardless of their identity and background, is more important than maximizing fairness.

Please reconsider this harmful proposal.