



Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania
Promoting best practices in school psychology.



PENNSYLVANIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION



AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION



NASSP
National Association of Secondary School Principals



School Social Work Association of America



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

April 21, 2021

Hon. Barbara Gleim
149B East Wing
P.O. Box 202199
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2199

Dear Representative Gleim,

Together, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania (ASPP), National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), National Association of Social Workers - Pennsylvania Chapter (NASW-PA), Pennsylvania Association of School Social Work Personnel (PASSWP), Pennsylvania Psychological Association - School Psychology Board (PPA), Pennsylvania School Counselors Association (PSCA), Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA), and School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) write to you to express our united opposition to House Bill 972, the Fairness in Women's Sports Act.

Our associations support legislative efforts that advance equitable treatment and protect the mental health and wellness of our nation's diverse student population. Conversely, we fiercely advocate against any legislation that, intentionally or unintentionally, causes harm to our nation's students.

Our associations promote evidence-based decision making. Advocates for discriminatory bills, such as House Bill 972, have been unable to provide empirical data reflecting how cisgender females have been negatively impacted by the inclusion of trans females on their teams, including no estimate of cisgender girls failing to procure college scholarships due to said inclusion of trans athletes. This bill's discriminatory stance and lack of empirical support are in direct opposition to the missions of our associations.

We ask that you reflect on your own childhood and consider the critical role that athletics and extracurricular activities played in your mental and physical well being. Consider the opportunities that participation in these activities provided to you: community, a sense of identity, confidence, friendship, support, and much, much more. House Bill 972 would systematically strip these opportunities from transgender youth. This bill such sets a dangerous precedent for how the Commonwealth of

Pennsylvania and the United States treats its transgender citizens, de-humanizing this population as undeserving of the rights and opportunities afforded to their cisgender peers and neighbors.

What message does this send to our trans youth who already face significantly higher rates of violence, depression, substance abuse, and suicidality than their cisgender peers? Research repeatedly indicates that student engagement (i.e., the involvement in school-based extracurricular activities) is strongly correlated with positive student outcomes such as higher academic achievement, higher social-emotional well-being, and peer acceptance. By barring transgender youth from joining the sports team that aligns with their gender identity, they are intentionally deprived of these benefits.

You have expressed that your intention in composing House Bill 972 is to protect women's rights. However, we question whether you have considered how this bill will degrade decades of civil rights advancement and the harm that it will inflict upon the lives of transgender youth who simply seek to be a part of a team. Please do not allow for an already marginalized group of people to become further marginalized and degraded.

We would welcome the opportunity to open a dialogue with you and your co-sponsors to discuss this bill's ramifications and to collaborate on building a brighter and inclusive future for ALL of the young people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Please feel free to contact any or all of us as indicated below.

Respectfully,

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