



MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY INSTITUTE

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MFI BRIEF

# WHY WE SUPPORT THE BILL TO PROTECT FEMALE ATHLETES

HD.297/SD.627  
AN ACT TO ENSURE FAIRNESS AND SAFETY IN SCHOOL SPORTS

No girl should be forced to compete in an unfair or unsafe game against male athletes. But under Massachusetts law, boys must be allowed to play in girls' school sports when there is no equivalent boys' team or when a boy identifies as a girl. This common-sense bill would give athletes and their coaches the legal right to opt out of competitions against the opposite sex without facing discipline.

## HERE IS WHY THIS BILL MATTERS:

### Keeps Girls Safe

Allowing male athletes to play alongside girls in high-intensity sports like field hockey, basketball, and volleyball has had disastrous consequences in Massachusetts and across the country. To name just a few recent examples, in 2023, a male field hockey player whipped a shot into the mouth of his female opponent during a match in Swampscott, knocking her teeth out. Last year, a male player injured multiple girls in a high school basketball game in Lynn. And in North Carolina, a female college volleyball player was partially paralyzed when her male opponent spiked the ball so hard into her face that it gave her a traumatic brain injury. **Our daughters' safety has been sacrificed at the altar of "equality."** But enough is enough. This bill would allow female athletes to sit out of any game against male opponents without facing guilt, shame, or discipline for doing so. It would also allow boys to opt out of matches when they cannot in good conscience put girls at risk by competing against them.

### Makes Competition Fair

When it comes to sports, it used to be widely accepted that boys and girls are different. The science shows that boys have significant competitive advantages over girls: boys have 30-40% more muscle mass on average, denser bones, stronger tendons, and bigger lungs and hearts. They jump 25% higher, throw 25% further, run 11% faster, and

are about 30% stronger. These physical advantages have been evident in Massachusetts sports, where boys who have been allowed to play on girls' teams have dominated the competition, giving an unfair advantage over all-girls teams. **If an athlete or her team does not want to participate in these unfair games, she should be able to sit out.** This bill gives her that option.

### Empowers Coaches to Protect their Athletes

Finally, this bill gives coaches the right to protect the athletes on their teams and ensure fair competition by opting out of games against players of the opposite sex without having to fear professional consequences for doing so. If this bill passes, no coach will be fired or written up for doing the right thing to protect their players. This is especially important because **coaches need to be empowered to speak up for their players** even when individual athletes may feel too much pressure to speak up for themselves.

Protecting girls' sports in Massachusetts starts with giving girls the right to opt out of dangerous and unfair competitions. Choosing to participate in school sports should not mean consenting to the risk of severe injuries and stolen championships. It's time to restore fairness and safety to girls' sports.

Visit [mafamilly.org/takeaction](https://mafamilly.org/takeaction) to learn how to support this bill.

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