

CONCERNED  
**WOMEN** *for* **AMERICA**  
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

## YOUNG WOMEN FOR AMERICA

**Statement by Halli Gravley**  
**Virginia Female College Athlete**  
**Young Women for America Ambassador**

Delivered January 30, 2023, at the Virginia House of Delegates  
Higher Education Subcommittee Hearing on HB 1387

Thank you, Delegate Greenhalgh, for presenting this bill and allowing female athletes like myself to share how much the integrity of women's sports means to us. My name is Halli Gravley, and I'm a current freshman at Liberty University and an Ambassador for Young Women for America. Young Women for America is a project of Concerned Women for America, the nation's largest public policy women's organization. As a female athlete in Virginia, the importance and significance of keeping girls' sports for girls only is extremely important to me. Since I was eight years old, I have been a figure skater and swam three seasons with the swim team while in middle and high school. I currently compete on a Synchronized Skating team.

In February of this past year, I completed my last swim season. I finished middle school and high school sports without the trauma of being forced to compete alongside a male claiming to be a female. That is not a privilege. It is my right. If we do not take a stand today, girls across this state will not be afforded the same experience I was afforded.

Everything about how our sports are structured recognizes the uniqueness of men and women. If I am in a relay of four people and one of my teammates can't swim, we would never be able to throw in a male swimmer from our school to help us complete the relay. This is not fair. It gives our team an unfair advantage over the other female relay swimmers because men are biologically different. As a woman and an athlete, I cannot comprehend how someone's gender confusion changes this simple, scientific, and biological fact. If how we compete in sports and what team we are on is dictated by our feelings at that time, what prohibits the scenario I just explained from becoming a reality?

Lia Thomas, a biological male, competed for three years on the University of Pennsylvania men's team and ranked No. 462 nationally. Once on the women's team, Thomas ranked No. 1 and won the NCAA Division 1 national championship in the women's 500-yard freestyle event in 2022. Because Thomas was in this race, Virginia Tech's Reka Gyorgy was denied a spot in the 500 finals and University of Virginia's Emma Weyant was ousted as champion. This injustice is devastating for all female athletes who have trained for years to beat records, place at championships, or even secure their spot on a collegiate team. Our academic futures and scholarships are on the line.

As an Ambassador for Young Women for America, I represent not only myself as an athlete but also young women across this state and this country who believe one of the most foundational truths that have existed from the beginning of time – God created two distinct sexes male and female. Allowing biological males to compete in women's sports is an attack on science— on physical reality— and a betrayal of women's rights.

So, on behalf of the thousands of young women I represent, I'd like to take this moment to once again thank Delegate Greenhalgh for including protections for female college athletes in this bill. Will talented Virginia athletes stay in this state to compete for titles, or will they be forced to head to another state in search of the fair opportunities they deserve? Women and girl athletes at every level of education deserve protection in sports and school facilities.

Every legislator must ask themselves if they will fight for true women's progress or if they will stand by and watch as every shred of progress women have made in the past few decades is erased by ignoring biological reality. Less than a year ago, we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX, and yet here I stand today, still having to defend my right, and the right of women across this state, to have a fair playing field and maintain the integrity of girls' sports. This is not progress.