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Sent: Fri, 11 Jun 2021 16:09:17 -0400
To: T9PublicHearing
Subject: let women keep their sports!

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I am writing to urge you to protect women's sports. I was a dedicated track and cross country athlete throughout high school. As team captain junior and senior year I led my team to state championships each season. My 4X800 team in junior year broke the state record. I personally held the 1000m record in indoor track and field for several years after graduating. I was extremely dedicated and this is why I was successful. My success in these sports stays with me today. I was very proud of my accomplishments in high school. And I was very grateful to work together as a team and succeed several times. If I were up against individuals with male bodies who identify as women I am certain neither I or my team would have seen our hard work pay off as we did. I am sure I would be quite discouraged and many of my teammates would as well. I wonder if I would have even stuck with it. I certainly would not have dedicated myself so completely to succeeding if I knew I always had an unfair disadvantage.

In my 20's I succumbed to addiction and mental illness. Today at 43 I have been clean and sober 10 years. As I got sober and learned to stay sober I began to run more often. When I ran I felt strong and empowered just like when I was on my team in high school. The success we achieve in high school is still with me today reminding me I am strong and empowered and can work to achieve my dreams. Because of my success as an athlete in high school I knew I could dedicate myself to a goal and achieve it. My 10 years of recovery reflects this.

If I did not have a fair shot in high school at my hard work as an athlete paying off I may have quit the team. If I stayed I would most likely not have been as successful. I would perhaps not know when I needed to get sober that I could achieve a seemingly impossible goal. But I knew I could because I experienced this as a runner in my youth. My heart breaks for any woman who is unfairly disadvantaged by competing against male bodies who identify as women. Men are by far stronger and faster. It is more than unfair in the area of sports, it is unfair to these women in their lives going forward. Sincerely, Jen Gates

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