

Council Bill 6-22_PhyllisKLerner_FAVORABLE
Date of Hearing: 4/05/2022

Phyllis K. Lerner
Bethesda, MD 20815

TESTIMONY ON Bill 6-22 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Montgomery County Sports Commission - Established

TO: Council President Albornoz and Members of the Council

FROM: Phyllis K. Lerner

OPENING: My name is Phyllis K. Lerner. I am a resident of District 8. I am submitting this testimony supporting B 6-22 Montgomery County Sports Commission - Established

My family lived on Ridgewood Avenue in Chevy Chase. Recess and PE, the highlight of many school days, involved a bit of learning and a great deal of action. When it came time to pick kickball teams, I was often one of the first selected. At Radnor Elementary, I played Little League Baseball with the boys after school, until the season began. Then I became the team secretary. At Whitman High School I participated on 6-8 Honor Teams, from field hockey to softball. The only time I had an actual uniform, other than a “pinnie” over my shorts and shirt, I was a majorette. There were no varsity sports for girls. As a HS senior, I was honored to receive the award for Outstanding Girl Athlete. I was handed a plastic box with a pin inside. The boy, who received the comparable award, got a full college athletic scholarship, a big trophy, and a Rotary Club check. On that stage, in 1967, I said to myself, “This isn’t fair.” Fifty years later, I did receive my high school letter when I was named to Whitman Athletic Hall of Fame.

I went to Springfield College as a Physical Education major. Some of you might know it as the home of basketball and volleyball. In addition to a rigorous and strenuous curriculum, I also gravitated to the co-curriculum: the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Feminist movement. From different dorm curfew times for males and females, no access to certain courses to limited opportunities to travel and excel in competitions, the academic and athletic life of a students was filled with gender disparities. Fifty years after graduation, I was named Outstanding Alumna, for my decades of work on behalf of Title IX.

I’ve been back home, in Montgomery County, since 1996. I’m an Instructor at Johns Hopkins Graduate School of Education, with the National Teach For America partnership. This June, Title IX will be 50 years old. If I asked my diversity, equity and inclusion colleagues around the country, or closely read the *OLO Report Gender Equity in Local Sports Programs* (Carrizosa, 2022), the evidence is clear. Any meaningful site-review, particularly one that doesn’t just open a single can of worms, like sexism in athletics, or racism in discipline patterns, will find pervasive, structural inequities in education. In alpha order, here’s a reminder of the breadth of Title IX, which covers: access to courses or programs, admissions, athletics, classroom climate, counseling,

employment practices, extra-curricular activities, financial assistance, sexual harassment, student housing (N/A), student rules and policies and treatment of pregnant or parenting students.

Times have changed, yet more importantly, people have changed our times. Whether it's racist heckling from sport event attendees, or a coach hitting on teen runners, it is long past time to be *in compliance*. I commend the Council for the powerful first step of funding and producing the report. Now is the time to act on it, on behalf of all students, and their families, establishing a Montgomery County Sports Commission.

This bill charges 23 Commission Members to heal our schools, and hold them accountable with equitably delivered, quality, movement, physical education, recreation, sport and athletic programs. **I respectfully urge your favorable vote on Bill 6-22.**