

**May 7, 2025**  
**Testimony to the United States House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Oversight**  
**Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency**

**Hearing: "Unfair Play: Keeping Men out of Women's Sports"**

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**Washington, D.C.**

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Greene and Ranking Member Stansbury, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to appear today.

My name is Payton McNabb, and I am a sports ambassador for the Independent Women's Forum. We are a nonprofit organization that exists to expand support for policy solutions that actually enhance people's opportunities and well-being. Independent Women's motto is Tell Her Story, Change The World.

Today, I am here to share my story. I am a female athlete from Murphy, North Carolina, who had my love of playing sports taken away from me.

Since 2022, following a serious, but avoidable, injury, I've been speaking across the country sharing my story and advocating for protections for women and girls' hard-earned rights — to equal opportunity, fair play, privacy, and safety.

Like many other little girls, I grew up playing sports. As soon as I could walk, my dad enrolled me and my siblings in various sports. I'm incredibly thankful for that because participating in athletics has afforded me so many life lessons and given me valuable skills.

In high school, I played volleyball, basketball, and — my favorite sport — softball. I was excited at the prospect of playing softball in college. But that day never came.

**My athlete career was hindered and cut short because I was forced to compete against a male athlete on an opposing high-school women's volleyball team on September 1, 2022.**

I went into this game knowing that there was a male opponent, but I felt helpless and had no idea what to do. Neither I, nor my team, or administration agreed that we should be playing against a man but the game went on.

Towards the end of the game, the male athlete went up to spike the ball, and it came right at my face, slamming into my head. The force of the ball knocked me down — unconscious while my body laid in a fencing position on the court. A fencing position is how your body reacts to a serious brain injury.

Everything was dark to me. The auditorium was absolutely quiet. My teammates were scared.

That was my last day playing volleyball.

Medical professionals informed me and my family the heavy news that I suffered a traumatic brain injury, a brain bleed, and my body was experiencing partial paralysis on my right side.

The doctors couldn't confirm how long it would take for my body to recover — it could take months or even years, and they couldn't confirm whether I'd ever be 100% back.

While I've learned to navigate my new normal, there are several challenges that I deal with on a daily basis — severe headaches, balance

issues, vision impairment and, as my mom has said, I'm just not the same kid.

It is completely aggravating because the injury I suffered was 100% avoidable — *if only my rights as a female athlete had been more important than a man's feelings.*

Since then, I've chosen to use my voice to advocate for girls nationwide, especially for my younger sister, Avery. I've decided to turn my pain into purpose.

I played a role in helping pass the Fairness in Women's Sports Act in the North Carolina legislature. Although it was initially vetoed by former Governor Roy Cooper—who, ironically, has three daughters of his own.

Since speaking out, I've heard from so many girls. They see it happening in their schools — male athletes competing in women's sports. The fear of being severely injured by a male athlete, who is undisputedly on average bigger, faster, and stronger than the average female, is real.

I want you all to know that this issue is very real. I didn't realize how big it was until it personally affected me.

What we are talking about is REALITY and basic truth. Men have an inherent biological advantage over women when it comes to sports. The advantage is particularly prominent with respect to activities where speed, size, power, strength, or cardio-respiratory characteristics determine performance.

Males jump approximately 25 percent higher than females. Males throw about 25 percent further than females. Males run 11 percent faster than females. Males accelerate about 20 percent faster than females. Males punch 30-162 percent harder than females. Males are around 30 percent stronger than females of equivalent stature and mass.

This is undeniable. And many more biological statistics can be found in Independent Women's "Competition" report ([iwf.org/competition-report](http://iwf.org/competition-report)).

I was so pleased to be at the White House on February 5th when President Trump signed the Executive Order entitled: "Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports." Finally, we saw a President act to make sure that sports competition for women is fair and safe.

Now, we need laws at the state level that define 'woman' and keep women's sports safe for women. Today, there are 27 states that have legislation protecting women's sports and more than a third of the nation also defines sex-based words across their state laws. All 50 states should have this sort of legislation!

I am so proud of the progress being made and the states that are protecting their female athletes. I will continue to speak out about my experience with the hope that I might be able to protect the next young woman athlete from being injured.

Thank you for having this hearing today so that my story can be shared.