

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7897



Introduced by 2nd District of Iloilo Representative
HON. KATHRYN JOYCE F. GORRICETA, M.D.

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING COMPREHENSIVE SAFEGUARDS FOR WOMEN
AGAINST ABUSE, DISCRIMINATION, AND EXPLOITATION IN SPORTS,
CREATING A SAFE SPORTS MECHANISM, GUARANTEEING ATHLETE
WELFARE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The State recognizes the vital role of sports in national development and in promoting the physical and mental well-being of its citizens, particularly among women and girls. Filipino female athletes have brought immense pride to the nation; however, reports of various forms of abuse—including sexual, physical, verbal, psychological and economic—along with gender-based discrimination and exploitation, persist across all levels of sports, from grassroots to elite competitions.

This bill seeks to create a safe, supportive, and equitable environment for women and girls participating in sports by instituting clear anti-abuse policies, establishing mechanisms for reporting and investigation, guaranteeing athlete welfare, and mandating comprehensive gender-sensitive programs.

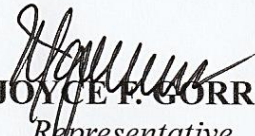
A key provision is the requirement for sports organizations to ensure at least forty percent (40%) representation of women in governing boards, coaching staff, and technical committees. This target is grounded in global research and gender-diversity theory. International studies show that female representation in sports governance averages 20% or less, with women occupying even fewer top executive positions. Social science literature on the “critical mass” theory indicates that groups require roughly 30–40% representation to influence decision-making meaningfully. Setting a 40% target is therefore both ambitious and achievable, ensuring that women’s perspectives on athlete safety, welfare, and gender-sensitive policies are incorporated substantively rather than symbolically.

Evidence from other countries demonstrates the positive impact of such policies. In Canada, the implementation of gender equity measures and mandatory reporting protocols in sports organizations has resulted in increased reporting of abuse, enhanced athlete satisfaction, and improved female participation in leadership positions. In Norway, policies mandating gender representation in sports boards led to greater organizational transparency, better

monitoring of athlete welfare, and broader inclusion of women in decision-making roles. Similarly, the European Union Gender Equality Strategy in Sport has documented measurable improvements in female representation, safer sport environments, and increased trust in sports institutions.

By integrating these, the proposed measure ensures that Filipino female athletes can participate in sports safely and equitably, while also promoting gender parity in leadership. The Bill also institutionalizes a national Safe Sports Mechanism, providing a confidential, independent, and transparent avenue for reporting and resolving complaints of abuse and discrimination.

The immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought to uphold the fundamental rights of women and girls in sports, promote gender equity, and enable female athletes to achieve their full potential in a safe and supportive environment.


KATHRYN JOYCE P. GORRICETA, M.D.

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. ***Short Title.*** This Act shall be known as the “*Women in Sports Protection Act.*”

SEC. 2. ***Declaration of Policy.*** It is the policy of the State to:

- a. Guarantee the fundamental right of every woman and girl to participate in sports in an environment free from abuse, harassment, and exploitation.
- b. Promote gender equality and parity in all sports organizations, including governance, coaching staff, and management.
- c. Ensure accountability of all sports bodies, NSAs, educational institutions, and LGUs for the safety and welfare of female athletes.

SEC. 3. ***Definition of Terms.*** — For purposes of this Act:

- a. *Athlete/Protégé.* Any female individual participating or aspiring to participate in sports, regardless of age, level, or affiliation.
- b. *Safe Sports Mechanism.* A standardized system for reporting, investigating, and resolving complaints of abuse, harassment, and discrimination, ensuring confidentiality, non-retaliation, and due process.
- c. *Abuse in Sports.* Any act or omission that causes or is likely to cause harm to an athlete, including sexual, physical, verbal, psychological, or economic abuse, as defined by existing laws.
- d. *Sports Organization.* Includes PSC, POC, NSAs, schools, colleges, and private sports clubs.

SEC. 4. ***Institutionalizing a Safe Sports Mechanism.*** The PSC, in coordination with the PCW, shall establish and oversee a National Safe Sports Mechanism. This mechanism shall include:

- i. Mandatory reporting protocols to immediately report incidents of abuse.
- ii. Independent investigatory body within PSC or attached agency to investigate claims.
- iii. Confidential complaint system for athletes to report abuse without fear of reprisal.

SEC. 5. ***Mandatory Anti-Abuse and Anti-Discrimination Policies.*** All Sports Organizations, as a prerequisite for PSC recognition and funding, shall:

- i. Adopt and implement zero-tolerance policies against all forms of abuse and discrimination.
- ii. Require signing of a Code of Conduct and Ethics by all coaches, officials, trainers, and athletes.
- iii. Implement regular gender-sensitive training on ethical conduct, anti-abuse, and athlete rights.
- iv. Conduct thorough background checks and vetting of all individuals in positions of authority over female athletes.

SEC. 6. ***Protection of Athlete Welfare and Rights.***

- a) Provide accessible physical, mental, and reproductive health services tailored to female athletes.
- b) Prohibit retaliation against anyone reporting abuse.
- c) Ensure sports participation does not jeopardize education and provide career transition support.

SEC. 7. ***Sanctions and Penalties.***

- a) *Administrative Sanctions:* PSC or relevant organization may impose suspension, permanent ban, or removal from office/employment.
- b) *Criminal and Civil Liability:* Administrative proceedings are independent of criminal/civil actions under existing laws.
- c) *Loss of Recognition and Funding:* Failure to comply may result in suspension or revocation of recognition and funding.

SEC. 8. ***Gender Parity in Governance.*** Sports Organizations shall aim for at least 40% representation of women in governing boards, coaching staff, and technical committees within five (5) years.

SEC. 9. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** Within sixty (60) days from effectivity, the PSC, in consultation with POC, PCW, DepEd, CHED, and recognized NGOs specializing in women's rights and sports, shall promulgate the necessary IRR for this Act.

SEC. 10. ***Appropriations.*** The funds necessary for initial implementation shall be charged against PSC's current appropriations. Thereafter, necessary sums shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. ***Separability Clause.*** If any provision is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. ***Repealing Clause.*** All inconsistent laws, rules, and regulations are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 13. ***Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,