Legislation Text

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Calling on the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association to revise their rules on religious head coverings for student athletes.

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) is a non-profit organization charged with developing and enforcing rules that regulate interscholastic athletic competition. The members of PIAA consist of a majority of Pennsylvania's public junior and senior high schools, as well as many charter and private schools; and

WHEREAS, The PIAA has a league policy that requires advance approval and a waiver for student athletes to wear head covering for religious or medical purposes during athletic competitions; and

WHEREAS, During a playoff game on February 16, 2018, Nasihah Thompson-King, a sixteen year old Muslim student at Mastery Shoemaker in Philadelphia and a member of the school's girls basketball team, was told by a referee that she would not be able to continue to play while wearing her hijab; and

WHEREAS, Nasihah played in 24 games while wearing her hijab prior to the playoff game and was never asked to stop wearing it while playing before; and

WHEREAS, A hijab is a veil worn by Muslim women in the presence of anyone outside of their immediately family and as an expression of their religion; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, Philadelphia has become the metropolitan area with the highest population of Muslims, with over 200,000 Muslim adults and youths living in the City; and

WHEREAS, The PIAA's current requirements that a student athlete submit a waiver in order to be able to wear religious head coverings during sporting events is an undue burden on the free exercise of religion and further alienates students on the basis of their faith; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby calls on the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association to revise their rules on religious head coverings for student athletes.