Supporting Transgender Youth & Their Families Amidst Trans Sports Bans

Starting in 2020 with the passage of Idaho's HB500, states in over half of the country have introduced, and several have passed, laws that would ban transgender women and girls from playing on school sports teams that correspond with their gender identity. While others have excellently explained the harms of these bills and provided detailed arguments to combat them, this document provides additional context as well as specific resources for transgender youth and their families who are distressed by these discriminatory bills and looking for support and ways to take action.

Where are these attacks coming from?

Given how certain lawmakers are discussing this issue, you'd think there was a massive wave of transgender athletes dominating high school sports. There isn't. What is happening is Americans are growing in support and understanding of transgender people, with transgender lives becoming more visible in their neighborhoods, popular culture, and everyday lives — even despite years of failed efforts to exclude transgender people through so-called "bathroom bills," a transgender military ban, and other hostile policies. These sports bills are just the next phase in a long anti-LGBTQ+ campaign; we won't let them drive transgender youth to the sidelines.

Who is behind these attacks?

While proponents of these bills try to give the impression of a national, grassroots movement to "protect women's sports," the truth is these bills are part of a coordinated strategy by anti-LGBTQ organizations, including the Alliance Defending Freedom, Family Policy Institute, and Heritage Foundation, to exclude transgender people from public life and enable discrimination against LGBTQ+ people (see also the wave of bills denying life-saving health care to transgender youth). They call their campaign "Promise to America's Children," and have actually set up a website where anti-LGBTQ+ lawmakers can download draft legislation to introduce. These bills aren't grassroots — they're cheap astroturf.

What happens after a ban passes?

A governor's signature is not the end; that's when LGBTQ+ advocates and allies go into overtime and challenge these bills in court as violations of students' privacy and right to equal protection under the law. The first of these bills, Idaho's HB500, actually has not gone into effect after a federal court blocked it last year. We also have to speak out in the court of public opinion, sharing how these discriminatory bills are unfair and hurting trans youth who deserve to be treated with the respect and fairness that are at the heart of sports.

Who is in your corner?

So many people around the country are working to fight this legislation and keep our communities inclusive and safe. In addition to LGBTQ+ organizations, businesses from Facebook to Nike signed a letter speaking out against these horrific bills. Famous athletes like Megan Rapinoe, Billie Jean King, Candace Parker, and Dwayne Wade have also used their platforms to speak out against this harmful legislation. Hundreds of NCAA student-athletes sent letters to the NCAA Board of Governors — not once, but twice — calling on the NCAA to take a strong stand and move championship games out of states considering anti-trans legislation. The Women's Sports Foundation, the preeminent advocate for women's and girls' sports in the US and globally, released a statement condemning the anti-trans athlete bans sweeping the country, underscoring the power of sports for all girls, including trans girls. In addition, over 60 organizations working on women's rights and gender justice signed a

joint letter indicating their support for trans-inclusive policies and strong opposition to efforts trying to exclude trans youth from being able to play sports. These examples are snapshots of the people and organizations actively fighting for your rights every single day. Meanwhile two-thirds of everyday citizens also support the rights of transgender students to play on the sports teams aligned with their gender, according to a recent US poll.

Who is impacted by transgender sports bans?

All youth are impacted by this legislation because it creates an unsafe environment that targets young women and girls. Many states who have introduced this legislation would determine eligibility for women and girls' sports by testing chromosomes or inspecting anatomy, which is a gross violation of privacy. In addition, anti-trans athlete bans detract from the very real and documented threats women and girls face in sport — like equal funding, pay equity, equal access to participation, and more.

Where can you go for support?

Below is a list of organizations, many of which do not focus specifically on the current legislation, but can provide vital information and resources for young people and families.

For Youth, Families, and Caregivers

- American Academy of Pediatrics: A variety of resources for families and gender diverse youth
- Asian and Pacific Islander Family Pride: The mission of Asian and Pacific Islander family pride is to end the isolation of Asian and Pacific Islander families with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender members through support, education, and dialogue.
- Gender Spectrum: Free online groups for pre-teens, teens, parents, and caregivers. Including groups for Black trans, nonbinary, and gender expansive teens and POC (People of Color).
- National Black Justice Coalition and the Cartoon Network: A guide to gender pronouns.
- NQAPIA: A federation of LGBTQ+ Asian American, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander organizations. The website includes information specifically for families along with resources and links to a national network of organizations.
- Trevor Project Support Center: a place where LGBTQ+ youth and their allies can find answers to frequently asked questions, and explore resources related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and more.

For Youth

- Center Link: A searchable database of LGBTQ+ centers, including youth programs, across the US.
- GLSEN: A national organization supporting LGBTQ+ students in K–12 schools.
- Trans Lifeline: Peer-to-peer support and microgrants to provide trans and nonbinary people with low-barrier funds to support legal documents.
- The Trevor Project: A suicide prevention organization that offers 24/7 crisis services for LGBTQ youth via phone, chat, and text.
- Q Chat Space: A partnership of CenterLink, Planned Parenthood, and PFLAG National, Q Chat Space provides online discussion groups for LGBTQ+ teens ages 13 to 19.

For Families and Caregivers

- PFLAG: Chapter Network: Peer-to-peer support meetings in your community (many meetings online). Contact one of the more than 400 PFLAG chapters across the United States.
- Somos Familia: Builds leadership in Latinx families and communities to create a culture where people of diverse genders and sexual orientations can thrive.
- Family Support Resources: A wealth of resources compiled by the Movement Advancement Project for families of transgender and gender diverse children.
- Trans Family Support Services: A national organization helping families of trans youth via support groups, insurance assistance, education and training.

Where can I go to learn more?

Below are a few articles to help provide additional information and perspectives on trans inclusion in sport and the current political context.

Background Articles

- Trans Girls Belong on Girls' Sports Teams — Dr. Jack Turban, *Scientific American*
- "Let Them Be Who They Are": Missouri Father Of Trans Daughter Testifies Against Anti-Trans Bill — Ashleigh Carter, *Now This*
- "The Truth About Trans Athletes and Performance" — Annie Hayes, *Men's Health*
- Four Myths About Trans Athletes Debunked — *ACLU*
- Fact Sheet: The Importance of Sports Participation for Transgender Youth — *Center for American Progress*
- Anti-Trans Sports Bills Aren't Just Transphobic — They are Racist, Too — *Them*

Trans Athlete Voices

- WNBA player Layshia Clarendon on Why Trans People Belong in Sport
- British driver Charlie Martin on being out in motorsports
- WNBA Hopeful Kayla Ward to Trans Youth: You Aren't Alone
- Erica Meacham, Women's Tackle Football Oregon Hawks on trans inclusion
- Hockey is for Everyone: Elliot's Story (Video)
- That's What She Said - Sara Spain talks to Chris Mosier & Anne Lieberman on trans and nonbinary inclusionin sport (Podcast)
- Trans Athletes Speak Out (Podcast)

Ally Voices

- Megan Rapinoe on Lawmakers Trying to Solve a Problem That Doesn't Exist
- Sky Blue FC's Imani Dorsey on Trans Inclusion
- Nearly 200 Athletes Supporting Trans Youth Participation in Sports
- Sports Saved My Life. Transgender Athletes Should Be Able to Have That Experience Too
- USA Rugby's Naima Reddick: Let Trans Women Play
- Joanna Hoffman of Athlete Ally: Trans Women Aren't Taking Over Sports, But Transphobia Is

What can you do?

- Go to the National Center for Transgender Equality website to identify discriminatory legislation being proposed in your state and learn who to email or call to register your opposition to that legislation. Let them know that this legislation affects you personally.
- Discover what gender-inclusive sports policies from across the US look like.
- Encourage people you know to also contact their lawmakers.
- Identify and follow a few sources of information that you know are credible. Do what you can to avoid information overload.
- Take care of yourself and others. Remember that thousands of people across the US are fighting for justice for transgender children and teens. Whatever happens now, the struggle for justice will continue!