

## Protecting Trans Kids in Sports

### The Issue: Anti-Trans Youth Sports Bills

Across the country, we are seeing an influx of anti-trans bills that would ban trans youth, particularly trans girls, from playing on the team that matches their gender identity. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, legislators claim these bills are needed to protect women and girls in sport.

### States with Anti-Trans Youth Sports Bills

Currently, eighteen states are considering these anti-trans youth sports bills. This includes: AL, AZ, CO, GA, IA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, MO, MS, NH, OH, SC TN, WA, WV.

### What These Bills Do

These bills would essentially ban young trans girls from sports, imposing rules on K-12 athletes far stricter than even NCAA rules. Also, if passed, these bills would not only impact transgender youth; they would also adversely impact any female athletes who is gender-nonconforming or simply deemed as “too masculine”, opening them up to harassment and potentially invasive medical procedures in order to participate in sports.

### Trans Youth are Already Vulnerable

Trans youth are already a face heightened discrimination, violence, victimization, harassment, rejection, and isolation on and off the field of play. Such mistreatment leads to negative health outcomes. For example, **forty percent** of transgender youth feel depressed most or all of the time compared to twelve percent of non-LGBTQ youth. [Moreover, a recent CDC study revealed one in three transgender youth has made a suicide attempt.](#) Studies show that simply allowing trans youth to live in accord with their deeply held identity dramatically improves their health and well-being. Therefore we should be working together as a sports community to *support* trans youth in athletics instead of essentially forcing them out of athletics.

### Why This Matters:

Sports provide trans youth with much-needed community, self-confidence, and support. In fact, [LGBTQ youth who play sports report higher rates of self confidence and well-being than LGBTQ youth who do not play sports.](#) Currently only 12 percent of trans girls and 14 percent of trans boys play on a team sport (compared to a national average of 68 percent of all youth). If these bills become law, [research suggests](#) we will likely see a decrease in sports participation for *all* LGBTQ youth (LGBTQ youth already participate in sports at a rate 64 percent lower than the national average). We should be trying to *expand* access to youth sports, not restrict it.

### Sports Policy Experts Agree:

The majority of sports inclusion policy experts (e.g. the Women’s Sports Foundation, National Women’s Law Center, USA Cycling) and a growing majority of states support allowing young transgender athletes (K-12) to compete in leagues and on teams that are consistent with their gender identity. The goal of sports at this age is to build character, increase self-confidence, and

promote fitness. Children who participate in sports report having better grades, better mental and physical health, and feeling more included and invested in their school communities. All girls, including transgender girls, should enjoy these benefits.