

March 21, 2024

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we reject the continued legislative assault on transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people, including categorical bans on participating in sporting activities. We oppose H.R. 7187, the so-called Protection of Women in Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, which will not protect women and girls and instead is designed to further stigmatize and exclude transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people.

This discriminatory proposal seeks to exclude transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people from athletics programs, ranging from youth club sports up through Olympic levels. The bill would amend the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act to require all National Governing Bodies to ban transgender girls and women from participating. It also adds new definitions of “male,” “female,” and “sex” that aims to erase the existence of transgender, intersex, and nonbinary people.

Although the authors of the legislation represent themselves as serving the interests of cisgender girls and women, this legislation does not address the longstanding barriers all girls and women have faced in their pursuit of athletics. Instead of addressing the concerns that advocates for women and girls’ athletics have been raising for decades, including equal pay, facilities, equipment, and travel, the bill is a cynically veiled attack on transgender people. Sports often play a significant role in children’s lives and development, helping them to develop critical life skills like communication, self-discipline, teamwork, and leadership. Sports spaces are imperative for all people, no matter their gender. Transgender, nonbinary, and intersex youth want to participate in team sports for the same reasons as their cisgender peers, and denying them a chance to do so only serves to further isolate and stigmatize these youth.

Further, targeting and excluding transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people from participation in athletics programs alongside their cisgender peers is harmful to all participants. H.R. 7187’s intrusive focus on scrutiny of athletes’ bodies will effectively exclude girls and women with intersex variations from participation, will invite scrutiny and harassment of any other person perceived by anyone as not conforming to sex stereotypes, and will likely be disproportionately used to target girls and women of color. In states with bans on transgender athletes, reports have already emerged of cisgender girls being accused of lying about their gender and subsequently being subject to harassment and threats simply because they don’t meet some people’s expectations of femininity.

We ask all Members of Congress to strongly oppose H.R. 7187 and to reject attacks on transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people and to commit themselves to meaningfully advancing policies that support equal opportunity. If you have any questions, please reach out to Jennifer Pike Bailey, Government Affairs Director at the Human Rights Campaign, at jennifer.bailey@hrc.org.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
American Atheists
American Civil Liberties Union
Americans United for Separation of Church and State

Athlete Ally
CenterLink: The Community of LGBTQ Centers
Council for Global Equality
Equality California
FORGE, Inc.
GLSEN
Human Rights Campaign
Know Your IX, a project of Advocates for Youth
Lambda Legal
Mazzoni Center
MomsRising
Movement Advancement Project
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Council of Jewish Women
National LGBTQ Task Force
National LGBTQ+ Bar Association
National Women's Law Center
PFLAG National
Pride at Work
Reproductive Freedom for All (formerly NARAL Pro-Choice America)
Silver State Equality-Nevada
The Trevor Project
Transgender Law Center
Union for Reform Judaism
Women of Reform Judaism