

# Key Points of Information TRANSGENDER SPORTS BANNING



## Public School Defenders Hub 2023

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- Transgendered girls are being banned from competing on athletic teams with cisgender girls
- Ban proponents voice concerns that trans girls have an unfair advantage over cisgender girls. Other concerns include “danger” from trans girls sharing bathrooms and locker rooms.
- 30% of transgender youth live in states with laws preventing transgender students from participating in sports consistent with their gender identity.

- Research highlights that a major driver of mental health problems in youth is rejection of someone’s gender identity.
- Forcing trans youth to play on sports teams that don’t match their identity will worsen these disparities. It’s a classic form of transgender conversion therapy, a discredited practice of trying to force transgender people to be cisgender and gender-conforming.
- School sports confer a multitude of benefits (working in teams, discipline, resilience, belonging, goal-setting) that go beyond winning competitions. ALL students should be able to benefit from playing and feeling a sense of belonging in team sports. It is discriminatory to disallow students to benefit from school sports because of their gender identity.

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- The Olympics have had trans-inclusive policies since 2004; only one openly transgender athlete has medaled. California passed a law in 2013 allowing trans youth to compete on the team matching their gender identity; there have been no transgender state champions. Even Lia Thompson, a transwoman who won a 2022 NCAA championship in swimming, was well under the collegiate record set by Katie Ledecky. There is no takeover of transgender girls in girls sports.
- High levels of testosterone are found in cisgender girls, and trans girls on puberty blockers have negligible testosterone levels. Plus studies have shown that testosterone levels in athletes do not show any clear, consistent relationship between testosterone and athletic performance. Even the governing body for track and field has acknowledged that it could not confirm a causal relationship between elevated testosterone levels and performance advantages for elite female athletes.

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- Claiming that transgender girls have an unfair advantage in sports also neglects the fact that these kids have the deck stacked against them in nearly every other way imaginable. They suffer from higher rates of bullying, anxiety and depression—all of which make it more difficult for them to train and compete. They also have higher rates of homelessness and poverty because of common experiences of family rejection. This is likely a major driver of why we see so few transgender athletes in collegiate sports and none in the Olympics.
- There are many biological markers of sex, but none is decisive. Since the 1950’s scientists have identified at least six markers of sex: chromosomes, gonads, hormones, secondary sex characteristics, external genitalia and internal genitalia. The breadth of human physical variance is neither simple or binary.
- Separate, but equal did not hold true when segregating students by skin color, nor does it hold true for so-called open categories for trans and nonbinary athletes to compete. It is isolating, demeaning, and has the potential to make these competitors a spectacle.

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Trans girls should play on girls' teams.

- There is no epidemic of transgender girls dominating female sports. Transgender youth are a very small percentage of students and an even smaller percentage of elite level athletes. There has only been one trans Olympic champion since they instituted trans-inclusive policies in 2004.
- Forcing transgender girls to play on boys' teams is an unconscionable attack on already marginalized children and doesn't address a real problem.
- Outing trans girls by forcing them to play on boys' teams sets them up for potential physical harm from homophobic teammates.
- Studies do not show a clear, consistent relationship between testosterone and athletic performance.
- There is no single criterion that scientists use to determine sex, and even using those criteria is not straightforward and binary. A single criterion should not be used to determine who can and who cannot compete.

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