

Assembly passes bills banning trans students from playing women's school sports

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The Assembly passed along party lines two bills that would ban transgender student-athletes from participating in girl's or women's school sports.

One of the bills would ban transgender girls who were designated male at birth from competing in Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association girls' sports categories. But it would still allow transgender boys who were designated female at birth to compete in men's categories. The bill would also create a separate co-ed category for those athletes who want to compete against any gender.

The second bill would largely do the same but for the UW System and tech colleges.

Dems on the floor slammed their GOP colleagues for passing the bill, which they said would only serve to further marginalize transgender youth. They dismissed a common Republican defense that the bill is necessary to prevent trans girls who were designated male at birth from dominating girls' and women's sports.

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State Rep. Lee Snodgrass, D-Appleton, noted how state, national and international athletics associations already largely have trans-inclusive policies in place and have seen no evidence of them dominating sports. The Olympics has allowed trans athletes since 2004, she pointed out, and yet no trans athlete has so far qualified to participate in the global tournament.

"This is political theater which has turned into an exercise in cruelty and harm for young people in Wisconsin," said state Rep. Lee Snodgrass, D-Appleton. "To those of you who vote yes on these bills, I firmly believe you should be ashamed of

yourselves.”

Snodgrass also noted the bill, if turned into law, would most likely make the state’s demographic crisis even worse, as it would disincentivize people looking for an inclusive society from moving to the state.

State Rep. Mark Spreitzer, D-Beloit, asked his GOP colleagues not to “hide behind Gov. Evers’ veto pen” by voting against the bills.

But bill author Rep. Barb Dittrich, R-Oconomowoc, defended the bills as a way to provide an even more inclusive youth sports program by allowing co-ed teams as well as mens’ and womens’ teams.

She accused Dems of being disingenuous on wanting to follow the science and stand up for women when they oppose bills like these. She said she personally has friends and family who are LGBTQ, and she only drafted the bill after hearing concerns from parents and students about sharing girls teams with trans students who were designated male at birth.

She said people designated male at birth have higher levels of bone mass and “explosive power” compared to people designated female at birth, and she said no amount of hormone medication could change that.

She said high school boys are capable of beating the fastest woman in the world at a race.

“It’s rather disingenuous to falsely accuse others of hate and marginalization when you spew it yourself,” Dittrich said. “This isn’t a hate bill. This is a science bill.”

Dittrich was the only Republican to speak on the floor ahead of the votes.

Both bills passed 59-38 and now head to the Senate for approval.

Evers has previously indicated he’ll likely veto the bills. A spokeswoman for the gov declined to comment and instead deferred to Evers’ previous tweet when the bills were first introduced.

“My message to Wisconsin’s transgender kids and students today is simple: I see you,” the tweet read. “You are welcome, you are wanted, and you belong.”