

# Fair Wisconsin: Legislative Republicans continue to attack LGBTQ+ youth in Wisconsin with a transgender athlete ban

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On Wednesday, July 12th, 2023 Republican State Legislators Rep. Barb Dittich and Sen. Dan Knodl circulated for co-sponsorship two bills that would prohibit transgender athletes from playing on sports teams that align with their gender.

Fair Wisconsin, Wisconsin's only statewide LGBTQ+ political advocacy organization, released the following statement in response to the bills:

"Once again, far right extremists in the Wisconsin State Legislature have introduced a transgender athlete ban. It may be a new legislative session, but they are still playing the same partisan games.

We know that even just the consideration of such legislation harms our queer and transgender youth. The Trevor Project's 2023 Youth Mental Health Survey found that nearly 33% of LGBTQ+ youth report that their mental health is poor most or all of the time due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies. On top of this, nearly 41% of LGBTQ+ youth have considered suicide in the past year, while 14% have attempted it. There are very real solutions to addressing the mental health crisis facing our youth, but attacking and demonizing transgender kids is not one of them.

We were anticipating the introduction of these bills this session – a session that has seen the worst political attacks ever on the LGBTQ+ community nationwide. More than 550 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been introduced in state legislatures across the country in 2023, more than 400 of which are specifically anti-transgender. Of those

400, 75 are specifically focused on sports and athletes.

We have been preparing for this moment, and we are ready to fight back against harmful legislation like this. Last session, we facilitated the submission of more than 10,000 pages of community testimony, directed more than 5,000 constituent calls to legislative offices, held a dozen rallies across Wisconsin and built a coalition of more than 50+ organizations and community leaders that helped defeat every single piece of anti- LGBTQ+ legislation in the State Legislature. And we're going to do it again.

Our message to the extremists who wish to harm our community is this. Buckle up. We won't let you continue to attack queer and trans youth in Wisconsin. We defeated your efforts last session, and we are going to defeat them again. To our community, especially our trans and gender non-conforming youth - you are seen, you are valued and you are loved. We will always have your back, and we will never stop fighting for you."