



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wisconsin LGBTQ Legislators Condemn Cruel and Discriminatory Legislation Targeting Transgender Students

Madison - Today, Wisconsin Republicans announced legislation to discriminate against transgender student athletes in organized school sports. The bill's author, Rep. Barb Ditttrich (R-Oconomowoc), seeks to prevent transgender athletes from participating in school athletics alongside their peers. While unlikely to pass, this bill continues a longstanding trend of Republican attacks against our transgender youth and children, who simply wish to exercise the same rights and opportunities as their peers. Democratic members of the Wisconsin LGBTQ Caucus issued the following statement in response:

“Today’s Republican attacks on transgender youth and children in Wisconsin continue a deeply disturbing trend of legislators seeking to limit the rights and opportunities of LGBTQ+ youth in their schools. All young people, including transgender or intersex athletes, should have the right and the opportunity to participate in organized, school-sponsored athletics consistent with their gender identity.

“This proposed legislation is cruel and discriminatory and will cause further harm to children who are already under attack for simply being themselves. There is no place for discrimination in our schools, and that includes organized athletics. We must welcome and champion all athletes, regardless of gender identity or expression.

“This legislation is a blatant attempt to codify discrimination and perpetuate damaging, inaccurate, and deeply offensive stereotypes against trans youth, and discriminate against a group of young people who simply wish to apply their best selves in a sport they are passionate about. Instead of attacking kids who just want to play, our Republican colleagues should get to work on COVID-19 relief for struggling Wisconsinites.”

Advocates and community leaders joined in condemning this legislation. Human Rights Campaign State Legislative Director and Senior Counsel Cathryn Oakley stated:

"This unprecedented surge of anti-transgender legislation is not being demanded by constituents. Legislators in several states have openly admitted that there is no problem happening in their states that needs addressing. We know this because trans-inclusive policies have been in place for the NCAA and the Olympics for years. Lawmakers' suggestion that student athletes are trying to game

the system for competitive advantage is nonsensical and impractical. It simply does not happen. Their goal is to use these states to advance their hateful agenda, and this legislative push is being made without much care for the economic, legal, and reputational consequences these states might face in the wake of their passage.”

Helen Boyd, an author and educator from Appleton, WI, stated:

“This proposed legislation that intends to “protect” women and girls in sports does nothing of the kind. The evidence is very clear that inclusion of trans people in sports only creates positive outcomes for everyone. Inclusion creates more team unity, more care, and more bonding between teammates, not less. Trans girls and women, in addition, have not broken all the records and don’t regularly win against cis girls, and they have been competing long enough that there would be evidence of such if they did. I do think there are ways to defend against sexism in sports, but excluding trans women and girls from sports is not one of them. Trans girls are girls. Trans women are women. And everyone has a right to play.”

Jessica Katzenmeyer, an activist and community leader from West Allis, WI, stated:

“As an openly transgender woman, I am very disappointed to continually see these attacks on transgender boys and girls in our public schools trying to prohibit them from participating with the gender they identify as. This proposed legislation does not help or protect anyone or do any good at all. We should embrace the diversity of our children and allow our transgender children to feel comfortable in expressing who they are. Also, during these uncertain times, we should be focused on getting out of this pandemic instead of attacking our LGBTQ youth in Wisconsin.”

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