



Trans Inclusion in Sports

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THE
INCLUSION
PLAYBOOK

Key Terms

Gender Identity is about your internal and psychological sense of yourself as a woman, a man, both, in between or neither. Only you can determine your gender identity.

Cisgender describes a person whose gender is the same as the gender they were thought to be at birth.

Transgender describes a person whose gender is different from the gender they were thought to be at birth.

Issues Affecting Transgender Athletes

- Participation
- Safety
- Climate

Trans Youth in Sports: Participation

- Only **12%** of trans girls and **14%** of trans boys currently play organized sports (compared to 68% of all youth).¹
- **62%** of trans students say their gender identity is the reason they don't play a sport outside of gym class.²
- **41%** of transgender boys and **34%** of transgender girls say they **never** feel safe in the locker room.
- **82%** percent of transgender student - athletes are not out to any of their coaches about their gender identity.³

Sources:

¹ *Play to Win* (2018) at 20, Human Rights Campaign.

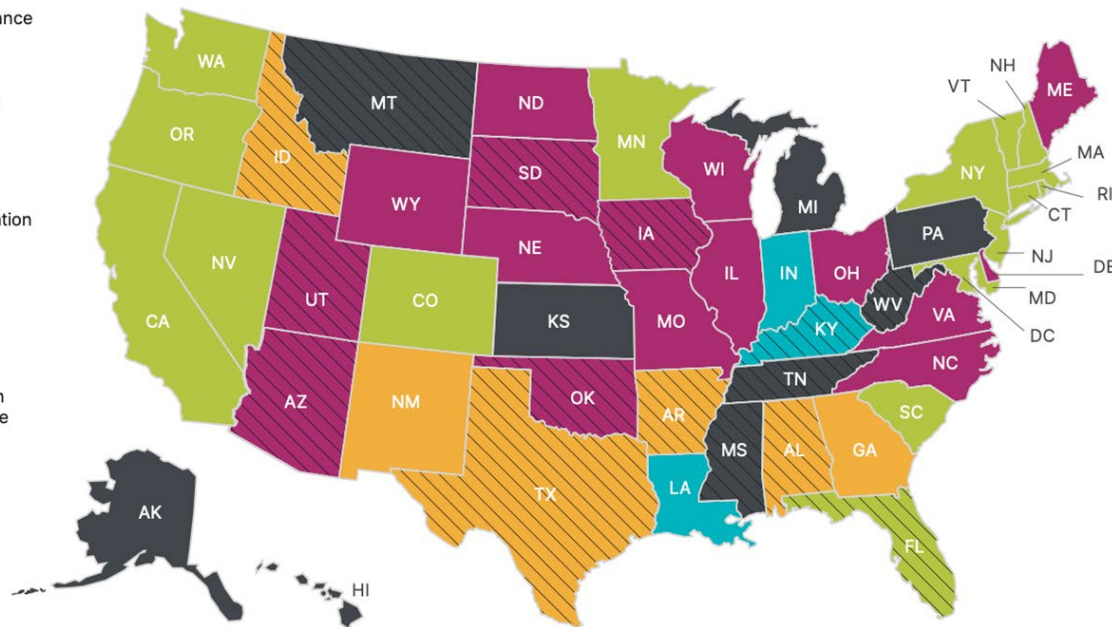
² *2019 National Youth Climate Survey* (2020) at 97, GLSEN.

³ *Play to Win* (2018) at 15, Human Rights Campaign.

State Athletic Association Guidance on Inclusion of Transgender and Nonbinary Students, and State Athletic Ban Legislation and Executive Orders

- Friendly state guidance
- Guidance bans transgender and nonbinary students based on birth certificate or sex assigned at birth
- Guidance requires surgery for participation
- Guidance places discriminatory restrictions on participation
- No state guidance
- Enacted athlete ban legislation/executive orders

*As of May 1, 2022



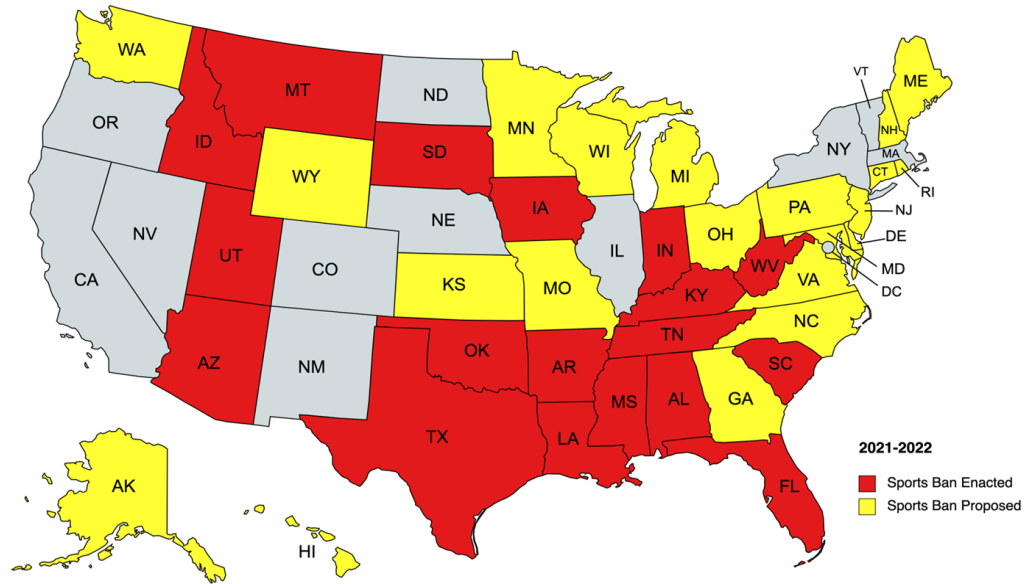
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State Legislative Landscape

State Athletic Ban Legislation (Last Two Years)



What these Bills/Laws Do

- Essentially bans trans athletes from playing in sport that aligns with their gender identity (always trans girls, sometimes trans boys).
- Takes decision making power away from athletic associations/organizations.
- Allows for parents and students to sue schools, school officials, and school associations for non-compliance.
- Creates conditions for harassment of all girls through invasive medical tests and examinations.

Sources:

¹ *Play to Win*(2018)at 20, Human Rights Campaign.

² *2019 National Youth Climate Survey*(2020) at 97, GLSEN.

³ *Play to Win*(2018)at 15, Human Rights Campaign.

Why This Matters for High School Associations

- Opens administrators and associations to new legal liability
- Threatens High School Association resources
- Impacts student - athlete health and wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing

- Youth report comradery and personal wellness as main reasons for participating in sports.¹
- Trans athletes (varsity, club, or intramural) report higher levels of psychological well-being, higher grades, sense of safety at school, and feelings of belonging than their trans peers who did not play sports.²
- Trans athletes were less likely to experience distress, suicidality, self-harm, harassment, school-related challenges, and depressive symptoms than their trans peers who did not play sports.³

Sources:

¹ *The National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health* (2021), The Trevor Project.

² *Fairplay* (2021), Center for American Progress.

³ *Fairplay* (2021), Center for American Progress.

Debunking Myths

Myth: Inclusive policies are harmful to cisgender women and girls

- Gender policing is harmful to all women
- Inclusive policies = increased participation
- Addressing actual threats to women's sports

Myth: Sex/gender is the most important factor in athletic performance

- Resources, training, nutrition, & other factors
- Biological diversity
- Non sex-segregated sports

Myth: Testosterone-based restrictions are equally applicable for all sports/levels

- Misinformation about testosterone
- Lack of clear links to sport- specific outcomes
- Misplaced professionalization of youth sports

Myth: Making trans/non-binary athletes compete in their own division is a workable solution

- Unequal conditions (resources, attention, etc.)
- Likely can't be implemented at all levels
- Harmful messaging

Myth: Trans athletes and advocates for inclusion don't care about fairness

- Support from a broad coalition of women's groups
- Historical precedent (creating a problem that doesn't exist)
- Inclusion benefits everyone; fairness for all



Policy Perspectives

Types of Participation Policies

Blanket Bans on Participation (Discriminatory)

- May violate state/federal laws

Surgical Interventions (Discriminatory)

- Require transgender women to undergo gender reassignment surgeries before competing
- Inhumane and not evidence-based

Hormone Interventions

- Most elite competitions (Olympics, NCAA Championships) have traditionally used policies that are hormone-focused
- Usually 1 year, sometimes specific hormone level testing requirement (e.g. 10 nmol/L)
- Inappropriate for youth/recreational athletes

No Medical Interventions

- Participation consistent with gender identity
- Recommended by experts for K-12 & non-elite athletes

Why No Restrictions for K-12?

Here's what the experts say:

- Research suggests that trans-exclusive policies can have a negative impact on the participation of all girls in high school sports.
- Adopting gender-inclusive policies may increase participation among girls in high school sports.
 - CA2014 Policy
- Trans youth are especially vulnerable to stigma/discrimination, in need of community
- Decisions about the timing of gender-affirming care and interventions are best left up to kids, parents, and doctors

Four Policy Principles

1. Inclusion

1. Fairness

1. Balance

1. Evidence - Based

Policy Do's

- Reach out directly to gender diverse athletes
- Consider level of play before determining restrictions
- Respect athlete confidentiality
- Include specific language referencing non- binary athletes
- Plan to review and update your policy in light of future developments in science and medicine
- Review federal, state, and local laws

Policy Don'ts

- Don't use language that perpetuates misconceptions/stereotypes
- Don't copy and paste a policy from another sports organization without careful consideration
- Don't rely on misleading research or studies that only compare cisgender men and women to each other
- Don't construct a policy without consulting with gender diverse athletes and sports inclusion experts
- Don't allow parents, opponents, spectators, or others to “challenge” an athlete's gender

Best Practices: More Than Just Policy

- Create space for your athletes to express themselves
- Use inclusive and gender - neutral language
- Respect every athlete's choice of name and pronouns
- Provide gender - inclusive uniform options
- Include fields for gender/pronouns on forms
- Attend inclusivity trainings and bring in the experts
- Remember: **82%** of trans athletes are NOT out to their coaches

A red-tinted photograph of a locker room with rows of lockers and a bench in the foreground.

Why This Matters

- **Trans youth** need sports
- **Positive impact** on trans athletes
- Sports should reflect the **diversity of communities**

Free Resources: Trans Participation Policy Project

Training Courses

- Trans Participation 101
- Policy Dos and Don'ts
- Communicating Your Participation Policy

Policy Support

- Legislative Tracking
- Policy Drafting



Get in Touch

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