

WPATH / USPATH Statement on the Bills Barring Trans Girls from Sports

March 31, 2021

The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) and the United States Professional Association for Transgender Health (USPATH) strongly oppose legislation recently signed by the Governor of Arkansas and being considered in many other states. These laws and bills will bar schools and other organizations from allowing girls with diverse gender identities to participate in athletic competition with other girls. The legislation will serve to increase the marginalization already experienced by trans girls, to pose harm to organizations that are supportive of trans rights, and to cause pain to cisgender girls who may have this law applied to them punitively.

The legislation not only bars trans girls from participating in girls' sports, but it allows others to force girls, transgender or just perceived as such, to undergo invasive medical procedures to ascertain internal and external reproductive anatomy, testosterone levels, and genetic makeup. Additionally, schools and other organizations will be required to join in the marginalization of trans girls under threat of monetary loss from lawsuits allowed under the legislation.

The legislation focuses on a problem that does not exist but serves as a mechanism to create a punitive environment for young trans people. The number of trans girls competing in sports are few. Their participation in sports neither prevents cisgender girls from participating in sports nor from receiving any scholarships. Beyond the damage to trans girls, the law could be weaponized against cisgender girls who are not perceived to be feminine enough, or purposely used to attack competitors.

The preponderance of evidence shows that young trans people are already at great risk of bullying, violence, and discrimination. The law will be used to further the attacks against them as well as other young people. Those seeking to protect young girls participation in sports will find that the legislation will do the opposite. Instead, creating an environment where all girls' bodies will be under scrutiny.

WPATH and USPATH call on our members and supporters to oppose such legislation as harmful to all girls.