



October 30, 2023

Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports
National Collegiate Athletics Association
700 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Dear Members of the Committee,

As a governing committee for athletic competition at all levels of the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), we are confident that you care about the fairness of college athletics. Many of you are former college athletes yourselves, and you understand from that experience that basic fairness is paramount in athletic competition. Many of the rules that the Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sports (CSMAS) is responsible for are aimed at protecting a level playing field, and it is in that interest that we write to you today.

We are writing you concerning the [NCAA's Transgender Student Athlete Policy](#). The policy reads, "transgender student-athlete participation for each sport [is] to be determined by the policy for the national governing body of that sport." We understand from our own conversations with NCAA President Charlie Baker, who is also a former colleague of ours, that your Committee is responsible for reviewing this policy and recommending changes to the NCAA Board of Governors.

We are cc'ing the members of the NCAA Board of Governors, as we understand that this Board initially passed the Transgender Student Athlete Policy, including CSMAS' role in that process.

The NCAA has the chance to guarantee an environment where female college athletes can thrive without the concern of inequities. We trust that you also want to guarantee just such an environment. But this policy allows the NCAA to avoid responsibility for ensuring the fairness of collegiate sports – therefore it must be changed.

As former competitors, you understand the years of blood, sweat, and tears that it takes to succeed at a high level. Competing in sports has so many benefits. We learn grace in victory, poise in defeat, and the importance of teamwork in every aspect of life. For young women, Title IX guaranteed them an equal chance to compete. And if these young women worked hard enough, they could even earn opportunities for collegiate scholarships and other success and recognition.

I am sure you are familiar with the story of Riley Gaines. Riley worked her entire life to compete at the collegiate level. When Lia Thomas, a biological male, was allowed to compete in women's swimming, Riley tied with Lia against all odds. Traditionally, when two swimmers tie, they both stand on top of the podium – but Riley was told that the trophy was going to be given to Lia.

When Riley asked why she couldn't stand for photos with the first-place trophy that she rightfully earned, she was given a series of non-answers that boiled down to "we just have to give it to Lia." The decade of hard work and the countless hours spent in the pool were suddenly wasted. Riley's lifetime of achievement was ripped away from her by someone who shouldn't have even been in the race – all for a photo op.

Science proves that it is fundamentally unfair for a biological male to compete against a biological female – that does not change when someone declares themselves as being of a different gender. The [National Institutes for Health](#) found that there is on average a 10% difference between the top performing males and females in athletic competition. In high-level athletic competition, a 10% difference is massive – and can even be insurmountable. While that difference may vary depending on the specific sport in question, the gap is meaningful across all athletic competitions. The reason why is simple: biological men are generally taller, faster, stronger, and have more testosterone than biological women. This puts women, through no fault of their own, at a disadvantage when they are required to compete against a biological male.

Allyson Felix is the most decorated track and field star in American history. She has won 25 Olympic and World Championship medals, including 17 gold medals. No other track and field athlete – male or female – has ever taken home so many prestigious awards. Allyson specialized in the 400-meter race, with a lifetime best of 49.62 seconds. Yet hundreds of high school aged boys have run faster times than that. Science has proven that male and female bodies are biologically different.

The NCAA has the opportunity to guarantee a fair environment for women's sports. If you take this opportunity, it will expand the possibilities for so many young women for years to come. But if you continue the NCAA's misguided policies, stories like Riley Gaines' will only become more common. Policies that allow men and women to compete against one another validate an average male athlete stealing the recognition from a truly remarkable female athlete.

Due to the lack of action at the federal level, governors have become the last line of defense for protecting fairness in women's and girls' sports. Many of us have gotten legislation signed into law to ensure this fairness, but more can always be done.

As governors of our states, it is our responsibility to care for our constituents, and we are doing all we can to protect the fairness of athletics in our states. Now, it is time for the NCAA to do the same and make the best decision for all of your athletes.

We strongly encourage you to rewrite your Transgender Student Athlete Policy to protect, preserve, and encourage fairness in women's athletics.

Sincerely,



Governor Kristi Noem
State of South Dakota



Governor Sarah Sanders
State of Arkansas



Governor Tate Reeves
State of Mississippi



Governor Mike Parson
State of Missouri



Governor Greg Gianforte
State of Montana



Governor Joe Lombardo
State of Nevada



Governor Kevin Stitt
State of Oklahoma



Governor Greg Abbott
State of Texas



Governor Mark Gordon
State of Wyoming

CC:

Charlie Baker – President, National Collegiate Athletics Association; Ex officio member, NCAA Board of Governors

Linda Livingstone – President, Baylor University; Chair, NCAA Board of Governors

Steven Shirley – President, Minot State University; Vice Chair, NCAA Board of Governors

Mary-Beth Cooper – President, Springfield College; Voting Member, NCAA Board of Governors

Houston Davis – President, University of Central Arkansas; Voting Member, NCAA Board of Governors

Beth DeBauche – Commissioner, Ohio Valley Conference; Voting Member, NCAA Board of Governors

Alliston Feaster – Independent; Vice President of Team Operations and Organizational Growth, Boston Celtics; Voting Member, NCAA Board of Governors

Jere Morehead – President, University of Georgia; Voting Member, NCAA Board of Governors

Isaiah Swann – Graduated Division III Student-Athlete; Voting Member, NCAA Board of Governors

Dr. Nadja West – Independent; 44th Surgeon General of the United States Army; Voting Member, NCAA Board of Governors

Javaune Adams-Gaston – President, Norfolk State University; Ex officio member, NCAA Board of Governors

Bryce Choate – Graduated Division I Student-Athlete; Ex officio member, NCAA Board of Governors

Madeleine McKenna – Graduated Division II Student Athlete; Ex officio member, NCAA Board of Governors

Carrie Michaels – Senior Associate Director of Athletics/SWA, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania; Ex officio member, NCAA Board of Governors

Holly Sheilley – Vice President of Athletics/Director of Athletics, Transylvania University; Ex officio member, NCAA Board of Governors

Lynda Tealer – Deputy Athletics Director, University of Florida; Ex officio member, NCAA Board of Governors