



To: Interested Parties
Fr: The Transgender Freedom Alliance
Date: June 4, 2026
Re: Responding to Attacks on Youth Sports Participation

THE CONTEXT

Republicans and anti-transgender advocates have elevated youth sports as a political flashpoint—using it as a wedge issue to justify broader restrictions on transgender people and stoke animus toward them. By focusing on sports, they tap into voters’ instincts around fairness and safety and pit the interests of transgender people against the interests of everyone else in America.

Voters do believe there should be rules governing sports participation—but they have real qualms when it comes to the details of blanket bans that apply across every age, sport, and level of play.

While concerns about fairness and safety are real, a majority of voters (55%) say decisions about transgender athletes’ participation should be made by schools and sports associations—not politicians. Voters’ views become more nuanced when they consider how blanket bans would work in practice. They are wary of one-size-fits-all laws that fail to account for differences across:

- **Sport** (e.g., fencing vs. soccer)
 - **Age** (young children at recess vs. high school seniors)
 - **Level of play** (recreational vs. varsity)
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CORE FRAME

When responding to proposed bans, emphasize:

- We all want sports to be fair and student athletes to be safe.
 - Schools and athletic associations already make rules about who can participate in different sports at different levels
 - Politicians are overriding those systems with blunt, blanket bans
 - Blanket bans create real harms and unintended consequences for all women and girls
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RECOMMENDED MESSAGES

- We all want **sports to be fair and student athletes to be safe**. That's why sports associations already **make rules about who can participate** in different sports at different levels and ages.
 - Those rules don't need to be the same for **every age, level of play, and sport**. A 6-year-old playing with friends at recess is different from a college athlete playing a contact sport. And the rifle team is different from the football team.
 - A blanket ban overriding those rules would be bad for everyone, requiring young girls to answer invasive personal questions or even undergo physical inspections by strangers if they want to play sports.
 - These bans would invite anyone to call for a "gender check" on any girl who wants to play sports if they think she is "too tall" or "too strong."
 - Participating in sports teaches important values like perseverance, dedication, self-assurance, and teamwork. We should want more young people to play sports, not put up more barriers for girls across the country that subject them to invasive interrogation or make them risk public ridicule to join a sports team.
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DO / DON'T GUIDANCE

DO

- **DO** emphasize that sports associations already make these decisions
- **DO** raise concerns about blanket bans that ignore real-world differences in sports, ages, and levels.
- **DO** keep messages short, values-driven, and practical
- **DO** pivot to shared voter priorities after making your point
- **DO** broaden the conversation to highlight the negative impact on all women and girls

DON'T

- **DON'T** get pulled into extended debates or hypotheticals
 - **DON'T** engage deeply on individual edge cases
 - **DON'T** start with accusations or discrimination framing
 - **DON'T** focus on hormones or technical debates about bodies
 - **DON'T** use a rights frame which voters perceive as pitting transgender athletes against non-transgender athletes
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STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

- **Avoid Zero-Sum Framing**
Position this as supporting all women and girls, not choosing between groups.
 - **Acknowledge Concerns Without Reinforcing Them**
Dismissing fairness concerns can backfire. Lead with fairness and safety, then explain why blanket bans are the wrong solution.
 - **Emphasize Participation Over Competition**
Talking about “competition” can trigger win/loss thinking. Focus on participation, teamwork, and opportunity.
 - **Use Effective Examples**
Remind the listener of the impact on young kids playing recess with their friends to illustrate the harmful consequences of blanket bans..
 - **Lead with Shared Values**
Start with common ground before discussing harms or discrimination.
 - **Avoid Hormone/Testosterone Debates**
Technical debates about bodies and hormones are not persuasive and often reinforce the opposition’s framing.
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SUMMARY

Voters agree that there should be rules governing sports participation, and those rules matter for fairness and safety. But they must be thoughtful and tailored—not one-size-fits-all bans that ignore differences across sports, ages, and levels of play.

When voters are exposed to the impact of blanket bans, many have concerns. Voters are uncomfortable with politicians overriding sports associations and other experts’ decision-making and imposing policies that could lead to invasive enforcement and unintended harm for all girls.

The most credible position is straightforward: support fair rules developed by experts—not politicians—that work in practice, and oppose sweeping bans that put all girls at risk, create new problems, and take decisions away from those best equipped to make them.

Please contact Adrienne Kimmell (AKimmell@sparksolutions.us) for more information or to schedule a briefing.