

February 25, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a 17-year-old 4 sport athlete. I participate in cross country, wrestling, track, and softball. Since wrestling is not a sanctioned sport through the Iowa High School Girls Athletic Union (IHSGAU), the girls and boys wrestle together in practices and at meets under the boy's athletic association, Iowa High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) . We have been fighting to get the IHSGAU to get wrestling sanctioned for girls to make it more fair for everyone. Because they keep pushing off sanctioning, the IHSAA has designated that some tournaments are to have divisions for girls only because they understand the importance of having females wrestle other females and the disadvantage that females face when they are made to wrestle males.

This has been a good alternative for the past 2 years for us female wrestlers. We are able to do the sport that we are passionate about and have a more fair opportunity because we no longer must wrestle against males that are biologically and scientifically stronger than us. This is something that is at risk though because of bills like the "equality act" and policies like those of the state of Iowa whereas students can participate according to the gender that they identify as. It is not right that we are fighting the IHSGAU for our rights to have a sport sanctioned for girls to be able to only compete against girls, and now we have to worry about males identifying as females infiltrating it. Why even have separate sports at all if you are not going to respect the scientific differences between natural males and females?

When placed against boys that have the physical advantage, it not only is unfair, but it is also unsafe. Natural born males are at the advantage because they have a greater lung capacity, greater bone mass, greater muscle strength, and stronger ligaments just to name a few, and no amount of hormonal therapy or surgery can completely change these differences. Placing girls and against boys puts girls at risk of injury due to these differences. Having had to wrestle the boys because the IGHSAU has failed to sanction girls wrestling, I understand the danger that this puts girls in. I am lucky because the coaches I have make sure that I am always paired with someone at practice that is my physical equal and at meets, they only allow me to wrestle if I am going against other girls or if the boy is comparable to my physical strength. My coaches are not able to provide me this protection though when I have had to compete against a natural male identifying as a female. This wrestler was competing as a female in a designated female division, so it was not until my match was over that we realized they were in fact not a natural born female which explained why I felt so over-powered in upper body strength (unlike what I have ever felt against another female wrestler). If the Equality Act is passed and we don't have legislation to protect girls from having boys in sanctioned girls' sports, then even once girl's wrestling is sanctioned, all girls will have to worry about this scenario and not be given the option to opt out of competition against natural males.

Wrestling is not the only sport that having natural males competing against natural females is unfair. The differences, I stated above, put natural males at an advantage for all physical competitions.

For example, my times in track are in the top 60 of all Iowa girls, and I would not even be in the top 300 for boys. These types of policies are going to discourage girls from even wanting to participate in sports.

My dream for the past 3 years has been to wrestle in college and then go on to fight MMA, hopefully UFC. However, I am now reconsidering this dream because I worry about having to fight against natural born males. I look at fighters like Fallon Fox who self-identify as female and have seriously injured other female fighters. Yes, I am putting myself at risk just fighting other females, but the risk is extremely amplified should I have to face natural born males. It is heartbreaking that I may not ever get to fulfill my dreams because of the fear associated with being forced to fight natural born males.

In short, females have been fighting for our rightful spot in sports. 49 years ago, Title IX helped us gain that spot by ensuring that we are able to compete against other females that are our equals in biological composition. The "Equality Act" will reverse all the ground that we have made as females. It is not fair or just to take away the rights of natural females to have an equal playing field against other natural females or their right to safely pursue their dreams in athletics all to cater to the rights of trans athletes. There must be an alternative to allowing natural males to compete against natural females. Taking away rights from one group for the appeasement of another is not the answer.

Sincerely,

A Concerned High School Female Athlete