



KENTUCKY HOUSE MAJORITY CAUCUS

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MEDIA RELEASE**

Fairness in Womens' Sports Act Passes House Education Panel

FRANKFORT, Ky. (February 15, 2022) – Kentucky lawmakers advanced a bill Tuesday aimed at preserving fairness in girls' sports. HB 23, sponsored by Representative Ryan Dotson, would require public K-12 schools and higher education institutions to designate athletic activities by sex—boys, girls, or coed.

In a presentation to the House Education Committee, Dotson shared details of the bill and the motivation behind it. The legislation prevents biological men from competing in women's sports, but still allows female athletes to play on teams dubbed for boys or coeds.

“My goal isn't to stir controversy or pick a fight. We simply want fairness and competitiveness in youth sports,” said Dotson, of Clark County. “Many of us have daughters. Why should they have to compete against men, who would have an unfair physical advantage? This is about ensuring female athletes have an equal playing field. Science shows us very clearly that there are biological differences.”

Under the provisions of HB 23, a student's biological sex is determined by the gender on their unedited birth certificate or sworn affidavit by a medical professional. The bill additionally includes legal ramifications for students who are deprived of an athletic opportunity or suffer harm. Dotson argues Title IX is about equality of 'women's athletics, and all the progress made will be destroyed by continuing biological men participating in 'girls' competitions.

Men and women are physiologically different, which often leads to a physical advantage for males. At puberty, males tend to have increased muscle mass and strength, including increased muscle mass, better lung and oxygen capacity, and higher muscle to fat ratios.

“Allowing biological males to compete in women’s sports is an attack on science and a betrayal of women’s sports,” Halli Gravley, a high school senior at Whitefield Academy in Louisville who testified to the committee. “Every legislator must ask themselves if they will fight for women’s athletes or stand by as every shred of progress is wiped out. This is the 50th anniversary of Title IX.”

Dotson’s bill comes as much of the nation focuses on the controversy surrounding transgender University of Pennsylvania swimmer Lia Thomas. Thomas, who swam on the university’s men’s team for three years. The swimmer joined the women’s team after beginning the transition process and has since become a serious contender for the NCAA championships. However, members of the university’s women’s swim team have spoken openly against Thomas’s participation and asked the NCAA to adopt a policy barring transgender athlete’s eligibility.

“There are those who believe this isn’t an issue in Kentucky, that this bill is a solution looking for a problem. This couldn’t be further from the truth and we’ve heard testimony from parents as well as young people struggling with their identity today,” Dotson added. “As a parent, I’m heartbroken and can only imagine what these families are going through. But, ultimately there is an undeniable physiological difference between boys and girls and it plays a major role in athletic competitiveness.”

The legislation now heads to the House floor for a vote after passing the House Education committee. For more information on HB 23, visit the legislature’s website at legislature.ky.gov.

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