



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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March 3, 2023

The Honorable Tommy Tuberville
United States Senate
142 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Greg Steube
United States House of Representatives
2457 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Tuberville and Representative Steube,

As chairmen of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth, and Committee on Catholic Education, we write to support your legislation, H.R. 734 and S. 613, the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act of 2023.

Consistent with the USCCB's [support](#) for this bill in the 117th Congress and the Church's clear teaching on the equality of men and women, we reaffirm that, in education and in sports, we must seek to avoid anything that undermines human dignity, including denial of a person's body which is genetically and biologically female or male, or unequal treatment between women and men. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was a needed landmark to establish equal educational opportunities for women and girls. H.R. 734 and S. 613 would help ensure the continued viability of Title IX.

Equal treatment between women and men has particular relevance in athletics, where male competition in activities designated for women and girls can be both unfair and, especially in high-contact sports, unsafe. In general, males possess distinct physical advantages in a number of sports, and this is already playing out in athletic events worldwide.¹ Their stature and strength can also pose physical safety concerns in high-contact sports.

These challenges are increasingly common as, sadly, the number of persons experiencing gender identity discordance rises steeply, especially among adolescents.² In response to young people who experience gender identity discordance, their right to participate in, or try-out for, student athletics on the same terms as their peers should be assured, in co-educational activities, or where the sexes are separated, in accord with their biological sex. Harassment or unjust discrimination is unequivocally wrong. Conversely, a loving response which affirms the value of all persons as fellow human beings helps those who experience gender identity discordance to attain peace with their mind and body, rather than facilitating drastic "transitions" in pursuit of an identity fully independent of their physical body.

We are encouraged that, in recent years, eighteen states have enacted similar laws to protect women's and girls' opportunities in sports, and that your legislation garnered significant support

last Congress. We appreciate the opportunity to support H.R. 734 and S. 613, and urge your respective colleagues to sign on as cosponsors and otherwise support this important measure.

Sincerely,



Most Rev. Robert E. Barron
Bishop of Winona-Rochester
Chairman, Committee on Laity, Marriage,
Family Life and Youth



Most Rev. Thomas A. Daly
Bishop of Spokane
Chairman, Committee on Catholic
Education

¹ See, e.g., Karleigh Webb, "Italy's Valentina Petrillo takes a powerful step towards Tokyo," MSN.com (Sep. 18, 2020) (*available at* <https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/more-sports/italys-valentina-petrillo-takes-a-powerful-step-towards-tokyo/ar-BB19b8zM>); "Transgender weightlifter continues Tokyo Olympics bid," NBCNews.com (Feb. 28, 2020) (*available at* <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/transgender-weightlifter-continues-tokyo-olympics-bid-n1145121>); Victor Morton, "Transgender NCAA runner named conference's 'Women's Athlete of the Week,'" *The Washington Times* (Oct. 30, 2019) (*available at* <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/oct/30/june-eastwood-montana-transgender-runner-named-big/>); Rebecca Reza, "Transgender Cyclist Rachel McKinnon Wins Second-Straight World Masters Title," *Bicycling.com* (Oct. 24, 2019) (*available at* <https://www.bicycling.com/news/a29578581/rachel-mckinnon-world-championship-masters-win-transgender-sport-debate/>); V. Morton, "Transgender hurdler easily wins NCAA women's national championship," *The Washington Times* (Jun. 3, 2019) (*available at* <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/jun/3/cece-telfer-franklin-pierce-transgender-hurdler-wi/>); "Actually a male': Transgender weightlifter stripped of world records," *Yahoo Sports* (May 14, 2019) (*available at* <https://sports.yahoo.com/transgender-weightlifter-mary-gregory-raw-powerlifting-federation-094109354.html>); Pat Eaton-Robb, "Transgender sprinters finish 1st, 2nd at Connecticut girls indoor track championships," *The Washington Times* (Feb. 24, 2019) (*available at* <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/feb/24/terry-miller-andraya-yearwood-transgender-sprinter/>); Stephanie Kim, "First transgender woman finishes Jacksonville Marathon," *First Coast News* (Dec. 19, 2016) (*available at* <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/first-transgender-woman-finishes-jacksonville-marathon/372266597>); Jon Gold, "Transgender cyclist is top female finisher at El Tour de Tucson," *Tucson.com* (Dec. 19, 2016) (*available at* https://tucson.com/sports/local/transgender-cyclist-is-top-female-finisher-at-el-tour-de-tucson/article_2c7d291f-4376-57a6-9578-3831353032bc.html); Douglas Ernst, "Transgender student's all-state honors in girls' track and field ignites backlash," *The Washington Times* (Jun. 6, 2016) (*available at* <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jun/6/nattaphon-wangyot-transgender-student-riles-critic/>); Dustin Siggins, "Transgender 'female' MMA fighter gives female opponent concussion, broken eye socket," *Life Site News* (Sep. 19, 2014) (*available at* <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/transgender-female-boxer-gives-female-opponent-concussion-breaks-her-eye-so>); Eric Prisbell, "Transsexual Gabrielle Ludwig returns to college court," *USA Today* (Dec. 12, 2012) (*available at* <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/ncaab/2012/12/04/college-basketball-transgender-player-gabrielle-ludwig-robert-ludwig-mission-college/1744703/>) (Ludwig's accomplishments in championship and rebounds available on biography page at https://www.missionsaints.com/sports/wbkb/coaches/Gabrielle_Ludwig?view=bio, accessed on Oct. 5, 2020).

² Abigail Shrier, "How 'peer contagion' may play into the rise of teen girls transitioning," *New York Post* (Jun. 27, 2020); Samuel P. Veissière, "Why Is Transgender Identity on the Rise Among Teens?" *Psychology Today* (Nov. 28, 2018); Gordon Rayner, "Minister orders inquiry into 4,000 per cent rise in children wanting to change sex," *The Telegraph* (Sep. 16, 2018); Georgiann Davis, "More people are identifying as trans and gender nonconforming. Why?" *Houston Chronicle* (Jul. 9, 2018); Lindsey Tanner, "More U.S. teens identify as transgender, survey finds," *USA Today* (Feb. 5, 2018).