

House Passes GOP's Transgender Sports Bill

The legislation would strip federal funding from schools that let transgender girls compete in female sports categories

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WASHINGTON—The Republican-led House narrowly passed legislation designed to force public institutions to prohibit transgender girls and women from competing in female sports categories.

The bill, dubbed the [Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act](#), requires schools to restrict participation in female sports categories to girls and women, “based solely on a person’s reproductive biology and genetics at birth.”

The measure passed the House in a 218 to 206 tally, with one lawmaker, Democratic Rep. Don Davis of North Carolina, voting present. Democratic leadership issued guidance to vote against the bill, but two Texas Democrats, Vicente Gonzalez and Henry Cuellar, joined all Republicans in voting in favor. A similar proposal in 2023 drew no Democratic votes.

The legislation would make it a violation of federal Title IX rules for any educational institution that receives federal funding to allow transgender girls and women to participate in female sports categories on the basis of their gender identity. The definition covers almost every middle school, high school and college in the U.S.

Opponents of transgender participation in female competition categories have been fueled by a handful of high-profile cases of success by transgender women at the college level—above all, Lia Thomas of the University of Pennsylvania. She won [the 500-yard women’s freestyle swimming title](#) at the NCAA championship in 2022 after previously competing in men’s swimming before transitioning.

The debate pits arguments of competitive fairness against arguments of inclusion, and it has divided supporters of women’s sports and roiled sports organizations in recent years. Criticism of transgender athletes in women’s sports [was a prominent theme in the 2024 election](#).

Last year, several collegiate women's volleyball teams forfeited matches against San Jose State University in protest of a rostered athlete who other players said was transgender.

The matter now heads to the GOP-led Senate, which is expected to take it up soon. A similar bill was introduced in the chamber by Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R., Ala.) and was co-sponsored by 35 Republicans. The same bill passed the House in 2023, but died in the then-Democratic-controlled Senate after President Biden threatened a veto.

Republicans called the legislation a return to practical lawmaking and sound judgment, seeking to signal a broader sign of GOP priorities less than a week removed from President-elect [Donald Trump](#)'s inauguration.

"This is a commitment that we have made because it comports with what is right and what is common sense," House Speaker Mike Johnson (R., La.) said after the vote.

Democrats criticized the bill as an intrusive overreach, putting at risk girls and women who aren't transgender. Some have called it the "Child Predator Empowerment Act," suggesting that it could require schools to conduct genital examinations. Others decried it as bullying and harmful to youth mental health.

"We cannot stand and allow politicizing kids' sports to be used as a political tool," said Rep. Pete Aguilar of California, the No. 3 House Democrat.

Biden [considered implementing federal rules](#) that would have prohibited outright bans of transgender athletes, while allowing some exclusions if necessary to maintain a level playing field, but ultimately pulled back.