



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ILLINOIS STATE SENATE

April 22, 2025

Honorable Pamela Bondi
Attorney General of the United States
Department of Justice
Office of Legislative Affairs
Attn: Paul Junge, Intergovernmental Liaison
Main Justice Building, Room 1137
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Bondi,

For generations, women have fought for a level playing field in sports—and that fight has paid off. Participation in athletics helps young women develop confidence, resilience, teamwork, and leadership skills that serve them far beyond the field or court. These opportunities were hard-won, and they deserve to be protected.

That is why we write today seeking clarification and guidance on the implementation of the recently enacted “Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports” Executive Order, signed by President Donald Trump on February 5, 2025. Specifically, we are requesting guidance on how this federal Executive Order applies to high school athletics in Illinois, particularly with respect to policies set by the Illinois High School Association (IHSA).

Earlier this week, the IHSA—a nonprofit that oversees interscholastic athletics in Illinois—responded in writing to legislative inquiries about whether transgender athletes would be permitted to compete in girls’ sports. In their response (attached), the IHSA stated:

“The [Illinois] Attorney General (‘AG’) and, more recently, the Illinois Department of Human Rights (‘IDHR’) have asserted to the IHSA that the Illinois Human Rights Act requires that transgender athletes be permitted to participate in events and programs aligning with the gender with which they identify.”

The IHSA expressed concern that:

“Compliance with the Executive Order could place IHSA out of compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act and vice versa.”

They concluded by urging state and federal officials to work together to provide clear direction on this issue.

With students, families, and schools seeking clear guidance, it's essential that all stakeholders work together to uphold the opportunities that Title IX has long protected for young women in Illinois.

When biological males are allowed to compete in girls' and women's sports, it undermines the fairness that Title IX was designed to protect. This is not just about a few lost podium spots—it's about preserving access to scholarships, championships, and athletic experiences that help shape the lives of young women.

We are aware that your office has sent warning letters to state officials in Maine, California, and Minnesota, asserting that compliance with Title IX requires schools to protect the integrity of women's sports. Furthermore, we understand that the Department of Justice has filed suit against the State of Maine, arguing that allowing biological males to compete in girls' sports constitutes sex discrimination under Title IX and violates the state's federal funding agreements.

In light of the IHSA's concerns and your office's ongoing efforts to uphold Title IX nationwide, we respectfully request clarification on the following:

- Does the position taken by the Illinois Attorney General and the Illinois Department of Human Rights—permitting biological males to compete in girls' sports—violate federal law?
- If so, does this position place Illinois at risk of litigation by the Department of Justice or jeopardize federal education funding?
- What steps can Illinois take to ensure that our policies comply with federal law while honoring the intent of the Executive Order?

The Illinois General Assembly is committed to ensuring fairness and opportunity for all student-athletes. We believe protecting girls' sports is essential to upholding the promise of Title IX and preserving the progress women have fought so hard to achieve.

We would welcome your guidance—and any further steps your office may consider appropriate—as we work to ensure Illinois complies with federal law and continues to provide meaningful, fair opportunities for all student-athletes.

Sincerely,

John Curran

Neil Anderson

Li Arcallano, Jr

Chris Balkema

Terri Bryant

Andrew Chesney

Don DeWitte

Dale Fowler

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