

Hello Board Members,
My name is Joe Alward (J-o-e A-l-w-a-r-d)

1. In an October 14, 2021 ADN article, ASAA's Executive Director, Billy Strickland, was quoted as saying,

“Any championship event we run we hope to have the best venues from around the state.”

2. Most athletes do get to use the best facilities that Alaska has to offer. For example, Swimming & Diving is at the Bartlett 50 Meter Pool, Wrestling/Volleyball and Basketball are held at The Alaska Airlines Center, Soccer is contested at West, Service and Eagle River, while Football is played at Service or West. XC Skiing competes at the World class Kincaid Park, Tennis is played at The Alaska Club East, and Hockey is held at the Menard Sports Complex. These are all fantastic venues for their respective sports.

3. Meanwhile, Track and Field has been awarded to 3 high schools over the past 14 years. Only two of those venues are adequate while one disputedly meets the minimum requirements to contest a T&F meet. Because Dimond's Track was built as an afterthought the venue has problematic deficiencies which can not be overcome. In addition, because of its' deplorable layout as well as the substandard surface condition of the track, this body should not endorse their bid as-is.

4. Under the **STATE CHAMPIONSHIP POLICIES** section on page 96 in the ASAA Handbook, there are 10 factors which are considered in awarding a tournament site, and the 2nd item reads as follows:

- (2) An **excellent** tournament facility that meets or exceeds tournament specifications including NFHS standards.

This word, "**excellent**", is not delineated in either the ASAA Handbook or the NFHS T&F Rulebook. As such, it has been left open for interpretation.

That is why I created a slideshow presentation to clarify for the ASAA Executive Board what an excellent venue looks like and to assist them in their endeavor to award a bid which offers the best available T&F venue for Alaska high school athletes.

5. About a month ago I shared this visual presentation with the Executive Board Members so they could actually see Alaskan T&F facilities which best meet our athlete's needs. It also presents a comparison between some of the key components which are vital to hosting an efficient, safe, fair and high quality championship event.

6. Because only one bid was submitted for T&F, and since Dimond's bid in no way, shape or form meets the criteria of "excellent", I highly recommend the board reject their bid. Afterward, the board should strongly suggest that they resubmit their bid but instead use West Anchorage High's premier T&F venue. If board members have any questions about the 3

unique ways West's venue is superior to all of the rest, or how holding the meet at West can save 3 hours off the ASAA State meet schedule, I'd be glad to answer.
Thank You

Hello, my name is KC Casort and I am calling today in my personal capacity as a Fairbanks resident and a West Valley high school graduate. I am opposed to the proposed bylaw change that would task coaches and school admin with identifying every child's sex at birth in order to out and eliminate trans girls from their teams and school communities.

In elementary and high school in the Fairbanks North Star Borough school district I was an avid athlete, dancing with a company 20+ hours a week. The older dancers were my biggest role models throughout my teenage years, and shifting to mentor the younger dancers and teach baby ballet classes was formative for me as I became a young adult. I truly don't know where I'd be if I had not had that close community as I was growing up. Every young person deserves the same opportunity I had to grow up supported by great coaches and mentors and other athletes.

This proposed bylaw change handed down from Governor Dunleavy and his State Board of Education is asking you all, who usually do the good work of supporting sports across our state, to participate in scoring cheap political points at the expense of real children. The ASAA mission says it is to "provide and promote opportunities through activities for all Alaska students." ALL students, not just some of them. The ASAA values listed on your website include integrity, respect, and inclusivity. From where I'm standing, altering your bylaws to exclude trans girls would be entirely in opposition to your mission and values.

Lastly, I want to express my disappointment that this bylaw change is even being considered. There are so many real, pressing issues in gender parity in sports. Promoting baseless fears about trans athletes does nothing to fix these real problems, and actively stigmatizes, isolates, and denies trans students basic participation in school activities.

I oppose this change because every kid in Alaska deserves to play and be mentored by adults they trust. Trans girls are girls, and all kids deserve to play. Please oppose these bylaw changes and any changes that attack or exclude trans kids when you vote today.

Best,
KC Casort

Hello, My name is Marcus Dunbar M-A-R-C-U-S D-U-N-B-A-R

I am here to talk about the sport of track & field.

I have been an Alaskan resident for the past 52 years and for nearly all of those years I have been involve in track & field in one or more of the following ways;

- Athlete
- Coach
- Official
- Meet Director
- Meet Promoter
- Track League Director
- Team Alaska Track Club Founder & President
- Track & Field facility design consultant

Last summer I had the opportunity to work as volunteer at the World Athletics Championship in Eugene Oregon.

I worked at the Official Practice Facility at Lane Community College which is just a few miles from, the competition site, the University of Oregon's Hayward Field

I was in charge of helping all the international teams get access to whatever equipment they needed.

This required me to move a lot of hurdles. Having worked at many different track facilities before and moved many hurdles, I immediately noticed that the hurdles at Lane CC were larger than any hurdles I had ever moved. I asked the head Lane coach why the hurdles seem larger than normal. He said because they have to be 48" wide the same as they will be using at Hayward. Those are the IAAF standards for top level meets. The lanes on the track & the hurdles that go in them are all 48" wide to make the competition safer & more fair for the athletes. The practice track needs to be the same as what they will be competing on to make it safe & fair.

Wow! That is great. I wish we had a facility like that in Alaska but we don't have any tracks in Alaska with 48" lanes, They pretty much all have 42" lanes. All except Dimond, where the lanes & hurdles are only 36" wide. Only at Dimond, all other schools in AK have 42" lanes & hurdles.

Now in Oregon, the OSAA chooses to have their State Meet at Hayward Field because it is the best in their state and that is what they want for their kids, 9 lanes and all 48" wide. There they even throw their discus & shot put right on the infield along with all the other field events. Truly a great opportunity for all the kids of Oregon that qualify for State.

But here in Alaska, for the most important track & field of the year, The ASAA State Championship, you are about to be asked to select the only track facility in the state that has lanes that are only 36" wide. If you accept this bid it will not be fair or safe for all the athletes around the state whom have been competing and practicing on 42" lanes their entire season.

Reject this bid.

"But it's the only bid," you say.

Now why is that?

I happen to know that Thunder Mountain has a fine facility, They put in a bid once which I hear was rejected because they were going to throw the discus on the infield. That should not be a problem, It certainly isn't in Oregon.

Kenai has a great facility but was also rejected, not enough hotels? Funny we always found plenty of space when 16 teams showed up there for our Region III Championship meet in 2015.

Perhaps the best facility of all, the 10 lane West Anchorage facility, was told by ASD that they could not even put in a bid because Dimond would be the only Anchorage school allowed to do that.

Doesn't sound like the bid process for this meet has the best interest of the kids at heart. Please don't stand for that, open the bidding back up.

To settle for the Dimond venue without looking at any of the clearly superior choices around Anchorage or the state would be negligent. The next time an athlete gets injured or disqualified there could expose ASAA to a serious lawsuit for ignoring these short comings.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this issue,
Sincerely,
Marcus Dunbar

Also submitted as attachment is a letter from Chugiak HS & Juneau- Douglas HS about numerous other short comings at the Dimond HS Track & Field venue. Please see below:

Tuesday, April 25, 2024

Dear members of the ASAA Board of Directors,

As you consider the venue for future state track and field meets at your coming board meeting, I urge you to consider the wishes of coaches even though you apparently have only one bid entered.

For years – nearly as long as I have been coaching – coaches have said the state (and region) championship meets should **not** be held at Dimond. These are in-the-stands comments, to each other during races, grumbled over conversation, etc. They rarely go beyond that.

I find this very ineffective; it only fuels negativity rather than seeks real solution. And I have been guilty of negativity myself, born out of frustration from not feeling heard. When we *do* raise concerns, we are met with silence, rebuke, or simply ignored – and we fear retribution. Decisions are made without our input, and in what seems to be a turf war rather than what is best for athletes.

Rather than unproductive grumbling, we'd like to work *with* ASAA to find a better solution to the state track and field venue conundrum. First, we ask that you please decline the Dimond track for this state meet bid cycle and for any future state track and field meet bids. This track is not suited for high-stakes competition and has shortcomings that cannot be overcome. It would be the first step in rectifying what we in the track & field community recognize: Not one track & field location in Anchorage is currently acceptable. If our state meet is to stay in the Anchorage area, we have to work *together* to select the most easily-corrected venue, then work to make it happen. Otherwise, we need to extend the window of opportunity to enter bids and actively recruit outside of the ASD.

When we get to the level of region and state competition, we are paring down to our most competitive athletes, some with dreams of college competition, breaking region and state records, or simply nabbing their school record and ending their high school careers on a high note. For such competitions, we should be at our absolute best.

The Dimond High track & field venue has four flaws that are hard to resolve:

1. The biggest flaw is that the lanes are simply too narrow. While they may “technically” be of legal width, NFHS 5-2-3 states that “Standard lane width is 42 inches.” In an article titled “Exact design standards spur quality track construction,” (www.athleticbusiness.com/facilities/outdoor-fields/article/15142626/exacting-design-standards-spur-quality-track-construction), author Paul Steinbach writes “

collegiate and high school tracks are typically 42 inches, or roughly six inches narrower than

Olympic lanes must

be a minimum of 1.22 meters (and no greater than 1.25 meters) wide. Lane widths on

those on an IAAF track, and high school track lanes can be as narrow as 36 inches, though

such a specification is not recommended.” The reason for this? It is TOO narrow. Athletes

cannot properly navigate the last corner in the 300mH without risking impeding other

runners, and the exchange zones in relays are too crowded. We have seen athletes time and again be disqualified for these very reasons – at a time when their performances matter most. Asking an athlete to adjust to such a physical change when they've practiced all season on standard lanes is unrealistic. This is particularly damaging to our most talented hurdlers, who have perfected their technique so exactly that any shift by an inch or two is highly noticeable. Imagine adding another half-pound to a girls or boys shot put and telling competitors, "Sorry, you just need to adjust."

2. The jumps pits are too short. NFHS Rulebook 6-9-17 states that pits constructed after 2019 must be "at least 23 feet (7 meters) in length." And while these pits predate that change and are technically legal, they are absolutely inadequate in today's environment of routine 21-foot-plus jumps with athletes who fly out of the pit and need to use their hands to stop them as they bounce out onto the running track. There is no room to expand these pits as they stand. It is scary to watch jumpers, especially the boys, during high-level competition.

3. The throwing area is relegated to the back 40 with golf carts and bicycles needed to get athletes

to and from events. It is difficult to watch throwers without missing running events, and vice versa. As such, throwers are isolated as almost an afterthought. Meet organizers do everything they can to accommodate this inconvenience, but at the end of the day, there are better options for our athletes.

4. The spectator area is difficult for watching the end of races, which is where the action is. The best spectator seating is on the opposite side of the track, making it nearly impossible to see what is happening from afar.

These points are all items you have heard before – yet time and again coaches', parents' and athletes' voices go unheeded. Considering these points, it is imperative to put these set-in-stone resolves aside and ask yourselves if we as a track & field community can do better for our athletes. The meet operators/officials are doing their best, but in a subpar location. This is not a personal attack – it is a fact. The venue is not suitable for state (or region) championships.

If Anchorage is the only school district to put in a bid and ASAA is dead-set on keeping it in Anchorage, then at the very least consider other tracks in the district. West is hailed as the best location, and for good reason. It has 10 lanes that are each 42 inches wide, the throwing area is

close and visible (and can be upgraded with minimal effort to be even better), and there is plenty of space for jumps to happen without interfering with the track. Perhaps South or Service could work as well. Chugiak and Eagle River are burdened with jumps pits in the running lanes (short-sighted “improvements” made by people without consulting coaches) but could also work if we reconfigured the way the state meets were held, and with some minor upgrades.

For coaches, we just shake our heads. Why not use the West High track? What is happening to make this very easy solution so difficult to become reality? We understand that these locations have been rejected in the past for not meeting all criteria for an effective venue, but all of the locations mentioned (West, Service and South) have fixable solutions that with a year’s lead time to accomplish would give us a far superior venue. Short of tearing Dimond’s facility down and starting over with 42-inch lanes, the problems are not fixable there.

Please, please listen to coaches and consider what is best for athletes. Hosting the State Track & Field Championships at West High – or going outside the ASD to Palmer, Kenai, Houston, Homer, Fairbanks, etc. – is better than Dimond.

Sincerely,

Melissa Hall – Chugiak High head coach

Jesse Stringer – Juneau Douglas Yadaa.at Kale head coach

Luke Steele – Chugiak High sprint coach

Brian Kruchoski – Chugiak High hurdles coach Suzy Bick – Chugiak High distance coach Roger

Spackman – Chugiak High throws coach Hagen Atkins – Chugiak High jumps coach

Good morning. My name is Meneka Thiru. I am a resident of Anchorage Alaska, a graduate of Polaris K-12, and a former swimmer for the Service High School team. Thank you for providing this opportunity to testify. I am opposed to the proposed changes to ASAA bylaws and any other changes that target trans youth in sports. The ASAA's mission is to provide and promote opportunities through activities for ALL Alaska students, a mission I fully support. I've been swimming since I was in preschool and in high school, I swam for Service and for NLSC. Swimming got me through a very tough time in high school - I was struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts and the pool was one of the few places where I felt good. We all know how beneficial sports can be for students. I want the opportunity to participate to be available to all students, including trans students. The organization's mission and its values of integrity, respect, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, and above all inclusivity, are in direct opposition to the proposed changes which target and exclude trans students. Thank you again for your time, and I hope the board will vote no on these proposed changes.

Thank you members of the Alaska School Activities Association,

For the record, my name is Rose O'Hara-Jolley. I am an Anchorage resident and today I am testifying on behalf of Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates – Alaska where I am the state director. PPAA strongly opposes the proposed bylaws changes which would require trans girl athletes be banned from contact girls sports statewide. This bylaws change is a blatantly discriminatory and designed to exclude trans girls and deny them the ability to participate fully in their school community.

Trans girls are girls. And all trans children are children first. The adults in this room should not forget that today. Trans youth should be treated with dignity and respect and should have the opportunity to live a healthy life, just like everyone else.

Transgender kids want the opportunity to play sports for the same reasons other kids do: to be a part of a team where they feel like they belong. Alaska students have been participating in school sports consistent with their gender identity for decades, and there have been no documented concerns related to unfair competition from trans athletes. Simply put, this change in bylaws does not address any real-life problems, but it would cause real damage to all students in Alaska.

We encourage board members to see these proposed changes for what they really are: A few people in power trying to circumvent our democratic systems to pass a fear and not fact based bylaw by this organization that they could not pass in the legislature. SB 140 a bill that would have enshrined in state law the unconstitutional actions this body is asked to make today was fiercely opposed and died in the legislature. They are trying to get you to bare the brunt both publicly and legally for their culture war. Do not fall into their trap. You do not need to pass this bylaw to be in alignment. LGBTQ people should be treated fairly across all areas of life The ASAA has been entrusted to promote participation across Alaska, to be an example for its values, not a political pawn and chess piece in our governor's agenda of hate.

Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates – Alaska strongly urges all members of the Alaska School Activities Association to oppose any amendments to the existing bylaws that would isolate, single out, and discriminate against trans children.

Sincerely,

Rose O'Hara-Jolley
Alaska State Director
Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates – Alaska

My name is Olivia Edwards and I live in Fairbanks. I am testifying in opposition to the changes proposed for ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1 & 2, in addition to any other changes that target trans children in sports. Denying trans students the opportunity to participate strips them of the many benefits of participating in sports, including better self-esteem, increased sense of belonging, and improved grades. This change also encourages violation of children's basic privacy rights by requiring educators and coaches to police whether a student is trans or not, which the school is not legally or ethically authorized to do under medical privacy laws, professionalism standards, and non-discrimination laws. The ASAA mission is to "provide and promote opportunities through activities for ALL Alaska students." Their values are "integrity, respect, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, inclusivity." Excluding trans students goes against their mission and values. Please do not enact the proposed changes to ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1 & 2."

Thank you,
Olivia Edwards

Hi good morning, my name is Brook Beveridge, no affiliation, i am calling on behalf of myself as an eagle river high school graduate.

My pronouns she/ hers and I'm currently living and working on unseeded Deninah lands in Anchorage. I am calling today to speak on the proposed bylaw changes, specifically article 7, section 1 and section 11. I am strongly opposed to these changes. This would make discrimination and hate a formal part of our schools sports, targeting children who are already at more of a risk for things such as bullying and suicide. Why are we, as adults, also bullying our children through these changes?

Forcing transgender and gnc kids to play for the sports team of their assigned gender is nothing short of traumatic. This also perpetuates the falsehood that gender only includes cisgender men and cisgender women. This change would force teachers and coaches to determine a child's 'biological sex', which violates medical privacy laws, professionalism expectations, and non-discrimination laws. how exactly would they make this decision? I am genuinely asking. Behind closed doors genitalia checks? I wouldn't want that for any child in this community, lgbtq+ or not, these changes allows for the potential of traumatizing and confusing invasion of children's privacy and bodily autonomy.

Denying these students the opportunity of playing sports would increase risk and likelihood of mental health issues and suicide, as well as denying them the many benefits of school sports participation. There is also no legitimate scientific data to support fairness concerns regarding the participation of athletes. These suggested changes perpetuates narrow minded stereotypes of gender and identity. Ultimately, this is just targeting an already marginalized group of the population, that are also children. These suggested changes are harmful and unnecessary. This is nothing but an attack on the lgbtq+ community under the guise of fairness. There are real issues in sports such as unequal funding, pay and resources. I urge you to reject these proposed changes and focus on legitimate sports related issues. Trans girls are girls, trans boys are boys, and all children deserve to participate in school sports. Thank you for your time"

Thank you members of the ASAA for taking time to hear my testimony. My name is Morgan Lim, I'm a Juneau resident, and today I am testifying in opposition of the proposed bylaw change requiring trans athletes compete in the sport corresponding to their sex assigned at birth.

I'm 31 now, but have been playing volleyball since I was 16 years old. I've been playing this sport for almost as long as I've been an athlete. I first learned by playing pickup ball at the local community rec center and I have continued into my adult life, recently playing in the Juneau co-ed volleyball league.

My fondest memory of playing volleyball was at a tournament in Seattle hosted by the North American Gay Volleyball Association. In volleyball, I'm a middle. That means I'm only on the court for half of the rotations. In our final game of the tournament, the championship game, one of my teammates said to me, "Morgan, I play so much better when you get back on the court because I know I can trust you." They said this to me not because I was so much better than anyone, but because I worked hard to play my role for the team. I communicate well, I encourage players when and how they need it, and I make sure to give 100% of me in that moment pushing against the cramps in my legs to close the block, get low to cover, or turn and transition to try and get a kill.

I do that because I love it and I do that because my teammates deserve it. More than playing hard to win, I play hard for my teammates. I want to lift them up and help them be the best players they can be. One lesson volleyball teaches is that the best skill you can bring to the game is making those around you better.

Volleyball has taught me that these are the skills you need to be a good leader, teammate, and friend. I want to spend hours here today talking about all of the things volleyball has given me and all of the ways volleyball has saved me. I want to tell you those things because I am begging you not take this opportunity away from Alaska's trans kids. Trans kids deserve the right to learn these skills. They deserve to know what it's like to be on a team. What it's like to win and lose as a team. They deserve to build lifelong friends and create lifetime memories. And their teammates deserve the opportunity to compete with and against them. Trans athletes only enrich our world and our experiences. But too often denying a trans kid the ability to compete in the sport corresponding to their affirmed gender means that they don't compete at all. Robbing them and their teammates of their ability to learn about leadership, hard work, teamwork, and inclusion. All lifelong skills. Before you make this decision please consider what this change would take away from ALL of Alaska's kids. I urge you to vote no. Thank you.

TO: The members of the ASAA Board of Directors
FROM: Coach Larry Whitmore

I am sure that you have received several statements and testimonies concerning the selection of a venue for the state and region track and field championship meets. Most of these comments and concerns come from head track and field coaches from around the state. I have had the honor and privilege to have been a track and field head coach for many years, coaching both our young men and women. I have been an official in every capacity allowed by the NFHS Track and Field rules book: from State Meet Director to raking out the long jump pit. I am still active in helping coaches, athletes, and programs in track and field not only locally but throughout the state.

Listening to coaches, officials, and administrators who have knowledge and experience (which carry a great deal of validity) is often a good policy to go by. In this case, making a final decision or selection based on what others say is not good enough. Find out all of the facts available and needed for yourself. An excellent place to start is the NFHS Track and Field rules book. Each member of the Board of Directors should read and study what is covered for each event. With this rules book in hand go and investigate as many high school venues in the Anchorage School District as possible. Find out which venue will be the best site for the state and regional championship meets. This may not be possible with all the snow this year. I am very familiar with the track and field venues of the eight high schools and will list for you my top five sites: West, Chugiak, Eagle River, Service and South high schools. In my professional opinion I would not even consider Dimond high school due to all of the inadequacies of the facilities. Our athletes, coaches, and officials deserve nothing less than the best we can offer. A venue that will minimize the risk of injury while providing an opportunity for our athletes to reach their full potential in every event must be provided.

While reading the rules book you will see that the National Federation of State High School Associations serves as the national authority on competition rules. An important part of their mission statement is promoting fair play for participants in education-based high school athletics and activities. (Page 83 for 2022 rules) Fair play is not possible when biological females have to compete with biological males. One way this fact can be proved is by going to track and field records at the state, region, and high school levels. These records show that a biological female does not have a chance competing against a biological male in any track and field event. The playing field will never be fair if this is allowed.

In closing, do not accept good as good enough. Strive for excellence, find out the facts, and find out what is true. I coach and model to all my athletes to do their best. Our quality of life is in direct proportion to our striving for excellence in all that we do.

Coach Larry Whitmore

Statement from Charles Lewis Tobin:

When I was growing up in the United States, cities and towns throughout the country were draining their public swimming pools and filling them with dirt rather than allowing them to let people of different colors swim in them. These were often the only large swimming pools in the entire towns, or cities. Fear of the “mixing of races” was behind this mindless destruction of their limited resources. Fortunately, Alaska didn’t follow suit at that time. Now, however, Alaska seems to be following small sections of our country in mindlessly raising other fears in an effort to limit the resources of its small communities to give all their students a chance to experience different sports. It also removes the local school board’s autonomy in doing this.

I’ve recently been re-reading the classic novel 1984, by George Orwell. In the early days of the story the main character, Winston, talks about the main tenets of the new administration:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

Then he goes on to talk about the little things that the 'new' administration does to continue to build on this, like their idea of the “Two Minute Hate” that is conducted daily, and the banning of all physical contact between human beings to keep them always ill at ease, paranoid and afraid.

Is this what we are working up to?

High School sports is a time to build up self-esteem, self-worth and discipline. It is supposed to show how to fight against bigotry, bullying, paranoia, and smallness of soul. Let’s hope we can keep sports looking forward towards bringing everyone together for a common good rather than separating them out into small groups pitted against each other over the scraps that will be left.

My name is Mike Coons from Palmer Alaska. I fully support the DEED Resolution and that ASAA adopt the athletic competition divisions in it's FY24 Bylaws.

This has nothing to do with any discrimination towards any of the approximately 7.2% who identify as LGBCD, 0.3% are CD, nationally. For Alaska, 350, 13-17 year old's identify as cross dressers, 5,000 total LGB (see link in written testimony. For the record I refuse to use the word Transgender since that is a lie.

This is about the true safety of girls and women whom participate in sports from harms caused by going up against a boy or man whom has far better physical capabilities as to size, skeleton, muscle mass etc. as stated in the resolution.

As we have seen, in the case of college swimming, a male could not compete at the highest levels with his fellow male athletes. He decided to say he was a woman, was allowed to compete with those women and because he had more muscle mass, greater lung capacity, etc. stole competitions away from those women athletes. Just on FOX on 19 April was a volleyball female athlete who stated that males competing in the female division now have a net 7 inches lower than male volleyball, which causes a dramatic unfair advantage. These examples must be stopped by the ASAA to ensure a level playing field for all.

I support that regulations should

1. Provide a girls' division with participation based on a student's sex at birth

2. Provide a division for students who identify with either sex or gender

This is fair and reasonable so all can participate in the sport of ones choosing, without the harms we have seen to date.

You will hear a lot today that has nothing to do with this resolution.

That this will increase suicides of cross-dressers, yet crickets on girls suicide increases. Not said is there is an even higher suicide rate of cross-dressers post surgery and hormonal therapy,. Be prepared for anger, high emotions and threats of lawsuits and yes even violence. This is how this group acts, though intimidation. For it is written: "And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed." All parents want is what is best for their child not just in sports but throughout life.

Stand your ground for all children of Alaska in passing as written, your draft FY24 Bylaws.

That concludes my verbal testimony. I would like to add in my written testimony some supporting comments for the verbal testimony and other comments I did not have within the time limits.

ASAA will be told by those supporting males on females' team that as board members they will be responsible for increased depression and suicide for those with gender dysphoria if they set a policy based on biological sex. The advocates will try hard to lay future blame on them. The truth is that depression rates and suicide ideation are already troubling among these youth, absent the sports issue. It is access to real mental health services, not the so called mental health from people whom advocate for this dysphoria as "normal", the care and support by loving families and friends that will help these young people. These children need to be affirmed as whom they really are as a boy or girl, know they are valued, know they are accepted and loved and that the affirmation, love and help is there to move them forward as adults – not some policy that is discriminatory against girls and women which causes more frustration, division, anger and confusion.

The truth is that depression rates and suicide ideation are also trending alarmingly upward among teenage girls. Trying to address mental health issues for a small group of confused youth through a policy that is unfair and unsafe for girls not only does not solve the depression and suicide issue for that small group but it exacerbates the depression and suicide problem for the entire teenage female group while also creating unfair and unsafe conditions for girls which rob them of opportunities. Trying to fix one problem by creating another is clearly not the answer, especially when the attempt won't work anyway.

As I stated in my verbal testimony, please understand these tactics are used because the advocates who are pushing for male access to girls' teams don't have a logical basis for their argument; the data doesn't support their position. Shaming and canceling will be their M.O. and ASAA board members need to be prepared for it, recognize it when it happens, and resist it.

I and many others ask the ASAA board to do the right thing in a respectful and civil manner, with kindness and gratitude for your service and with applause for your commitment to ensure girls do not face discrimination but retain an equal opportunity to participate and excel in sports.

Let's not forget that the policy you will be setting will have ramifications as far as protecting girls' dignity and privacy in the locker room, the showers, and the bathrooms while participating in sports, not to mention for sleeping arrangements when teams travel for away-games. I have not heard this much but... I would not be surprised on how having to have a male in the female locker-rooms prior to an event, especially in an individual sport has a mental impact on the upcoming competition. Having to see a naked man undressing, dressing for an event

must be mentally tasking and disturbing to say the least. This time is when the athletes are getting their heads into the upcoming event. This adds another layer of disadvantage to women.

Thank you for your time, effort and sacrifices as board members. I was a commissioner for the Alaska Commission on Aging and am very aware of your sacrifices.

Latest Cencus Report, 2020 13-17 year old LGBCD.

<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBT-Youth-US-Pop-Sep-2020.pdf>

Mike Coons

Hi folks: thanks for the opportunity to speak. I am Allegory Smith, A l l e g o r y - s m i t h, they/them pronouns, calling in from Lower Tanana Dené lands at 9 9 7 0 9, representing myself, and strongly opposed to the changes to ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1 & 2, and to any other changes that target trans children in sports. Trans people, and youth particularly, already experience extremely high levels of bullying, self-harm, and other violence - made even worse if racism, sexism, ableism, etc, are involved. If the ASAA intends to maintain any integrity in its mission to “provide and promote opportunities through activities for all Alaska students”, it will not be by separating trans students from their peers, disregarding their lived experiences and preferences, imposing outdated notions of “biological sex” on them, or otherwise policing and endangering an already minoritized population. The values of “integrity, respect, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, [and] inclusivity” seem better suited to listening to and supporting the actual social and athletic needs of trans student athletes, and not allowing the fear and intolerance of adults to impress itself in another generation of children. They are, and will continue to be, different from us, and the work of being in good relations with the inevitability of change is difficult; and ours to do, without blame or scapegoating. Truly, once again, we’re being offered an opportunity to break a cycle of cultural and intergenerational violence: do we reinvest in retribution, defining ourselves by the harms we’ve suffered, and lash out at another generation with which we have so much pain in common? Or do we take a little time-out - acknowledging that growing up is a lifelong process, especially if we’ve been hurt as children - and heal and learn together, in our own ways.

I have faith that the answer we need will be made, one way or another. Thank you.

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Allegory S.
they/them

Of Danish, English, Gwich'in, Irish, and Swedish ancestry, I live and work in the traditional and unceded territories of the Chena Dene Peoples, whose ancestors have lived here for millennia, and who continue to respectfully steward and defend these sacred lands with place-based knowledge and traditions.

Good morning, my name is Rebecca Bernard, I live in Anchorage, and I'm here to speak against the proposed bylaw changes to Article 7, Sections 1 & 11, and any other changes that target trans youth in sports. I'm the mother of two children who I adore, one of whom is transgender. I feel fiercely that my trans daughter deserves the same rights and access to opportunities as every other student. This proposed bylaw change goes against this principle and I urge you to reject it. This policy is harmful to a population that is already highly vulnerable. Separating trans kids out from their peers on sports teams puts a target on their back, exposing them to bullying and harassment. Many aren't out and will choose not to play sports if this is the alternative. It's discriminatory and deprives trans students of all the learning and growth that comes from playing on a sports team. The idea that boys would choose to identify as girls to gain a competitive advantage is ludicrous, and is being driven by fear and ideology, not reality. What's more, the participation of trans students in school sports simply hasn't caused problems in Alaska. This is an issue being imported from Outside agitators by a handful of people with a political agenda. And it's a backdoor way of implementing a policy that failed to garner enough support in the legislature to become democratically enacted law. Have Alaska students asked for this? I doubt it. I'd be willing to bet that if you held this hearing in any Anchorage high school at a time when students aren't in class, you'd have dozens of students speaking up for their trans classmates and telling you that this policy is unnecessary and a waste of your time. ASAA has a responsibility to provide and support sports and other activities for all students, and inclusivity is one of its values. This policy would isolate and discriminate against trans students, a very small group that is already vulnerable. This is the wrong direction for this organization. I urge you to stop spending time on this harmful issue and reject these bylaw amendments. Thank you.

My name is Mary Elizabeth Kehrhahn-Stark.
I live in the Fairbanks North Star Borough, zip code 99709.

I am writing to you in opposition to changes to the ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1 & 2, and any other changes that target trans children participating in school sports.

While preparing to write this letter, I reviewed the ASAA Mission Statement. The complete statement is,

MISSION

Provide and promote opportunities through activities for all Alaska students.

VISION

Alaska students become lifelong learners who are engaged in their communities and active contributors in society. #winforlife

VALUES

Integrity, respect, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, inclusivity.

It is a honorable, fair statement. I read in your statement, *inclusivity of all Alaska students*, in the activities you support through your association. However, the proposed changes contradict your values.

Transgender youth are already vulnerable to discrimination, harassment, bullying, and social rejection—and exclusionary policies such as a sports bans further legitimizes transphobic attitudes by sending the message that transgender youth are not welcome in spaces that are otherwise open to all other youth. It is clear that transgender youth are in need of policies that create an inclusive and supportive learning environment. And with already staggeringly high rates of suicidality among transgender youth, transgender sports bans may have disastrous, life-threatening consequences.

Transgender youth should have the same opportunity as all youth to be part of a team and feel a sense of self-worth and belonging. Rather than discriminating against students simply because they're transgender, the ASAA should adopt an inclusive sports policy that fosters welcoming environments for transgender and nonbinary youth and work to remove barriers and improve participation for all youth as your mission statement already clearly states.

To protect students' privacy and push back against discrimination, the ASAA Board must oppose the changes and allow trans students be part of the team.

Dear Members of the Board of Directors,

My name is Matt Barth. My wife Jennifer and I are lifelong Alaskans who grew up playing sports in Alaska under the Alaska School Activities Association (ASAA). We are now raising our two daughters here in Alaska. I am writing to express my opposition to allowing biological male athletes to compete against biological female athletes.

First and foremost, I want to emphasize that my opposition is not out of hate for those who may be struggling with their identity. On the contrary, I care deeply for those individuals and believe that supporting them means telling them the truth about who they are. Love is accepting people for who they truly are and not encouraging them to embrace something they are not. Allowing biological males to compete against biological females not only creates an unfair advantage, but also undermines the rights and safety of female athletes.

The physical differences between males and females go beyond just testosterone levels. Men have a greater cardio capacity, more muscle mass, and increased bone density, among other differences. These differences are intertwined in the human body and are unalterable in the DNA. No matter the number of pharmaceuticals prescribed to a biological male, all these differences cannot be made equal. Allowing males to compete against females is devastating to our young women who deserve the same opportunities and rights as our young men. Common sense, statistics, and science all demonstrate that allowing biological males to compete against biological females is unfair and has negative effects on women.

It is crucial to note that the negative impacts of this policy change extend beyond just unfair competition. It also creates unnecessary division within our community and could have harmful effects on individuals who identify as transgender. By allowing biological boys to compete against girls, we risk alienating these individuals from the support and resources they need.

I want to thank all of you for your dedication to ASAA and our community. I understand that this issue may not have been what you expected to handle when joining the board, but I implore you to consider the physical and mental health, safety, and rights of our children. Please protect girls' sports by rejecting the proposal to allow biological males to compete against biological females.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Barth". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matt Barth

My name is Amber O'Brien and I'm testifying on behalf of myself and my 3 children who all attend school in the Matsu and are all 3 currently running track.

We have been involved in youth sports since my daughter who will be graduating in a matter of days was in 4th grade. Her elementary school offered a number of sports in the hopes of getting kids interested and she tried soccer, basketball, volleyball, and then she tried track and that was it. She was in love, she started to run and she never stopped. Running xc and track every year since and dragging her brothers down that rabbit hole with her. In fact, I think her youngest brother's 1st words were "faster, faster". Isn't that what we're supposed to be doing here? Fostering the love of sports and athletics in kids, not gatekeeping them?

When my kids talk to other kids about their experiences on team and in club sports its always to try and convince them to come along and give it a try, they love their sport and they want others to love it too! The kids I know from my time in sports and with my kids they'd never be so heartless as to want to push another kid out, in fact I think team sports are supposed to foster the feeling of belonging and acceptance.

Kids in sports are always told by the athletic directors in schools that they're role models, that they're representing their school and community when they step out onto the court or field, or track, what exactly are they representing if were telling SOME KIDS that they just can't play because they just don't fit in the right boxes??? I ask this board to remember the simple adage that no one is remembered kindly for who they excluded, be remembered for who you included. Be remembered for doing the right thing and let ALL kids play.

Eric Muehling

I live in Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

I played sports in school. My sports were pingpong, track, football and wrestling. I wrestled in the 165 pound weight class. That was a few pounds ago.

In high school, in the 1960s, all these sports were exclusively for boys. I never questioned why at the time.

A few years after I graduated, girls were on the football and wrestle teams. At first I thought that was weird. I came to understand girls should be able to play in sports because they should have the right to play the sport they love and want to play. Their appearances and genetic make up shouldn't stop that.

Participation in sports is self-expression. Athletes gain confidence, improve physical, mental, and emotional health and have fun all at once. Everyone wins.

Through sports I built friendships. I developed a sense of care and empathy. And a sense of belonging.

When I look back at high school, I think it's that sense of belonging that was most important to me.

All students need that belonging. It's good for their mental health development.

School policies should not perpetuate gender stereotypes.

Strict gender roles set unfair boundaries on kids. Strict gender roles limit the student's potential.

My mother told me life is hard enough for queer people who face prejudice, and intolerance, and discrimination. Mom said, "Never add to that."

Discriminatory resolutions like this harm trans kids.

Always be kind to those different from you.

Remember this Golden Rule: Do unto others, as they want — you to do — to them.

I oppose unfair discriminatory resolutions like this.

I strongly oppose changes to the ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1 & 2 and any other changes that unfairly target trans children in sports.

Let acceptance, kindness, tolerance and love be your guide.

5-1-2023 Public Testimony to Alaska Schools Activities Association

Good morning/afternoon. I'm Shelley Hughes, Senator for District M. I carried the bill to protect girls sports that had the votes last spring to pass but got caught up in the legislative session endgame. I want to point out that before Title IX in 1972 only 300,000 females played school sports in the US. When I was a teenager, my only option was to be a cheerleader for the boys' teams. Thankfully because of Title IX under ASAA's leadership, my daughter got to play varsity basketball in high school in Alaska. Today the number of female athletes in our nation has increased by over 900 percent to more than 3.5 million thanks to the girls-only-on-girls'-teams and equal opportunity policy that ensured fair and safe competition for females.

I know you didn't step up to your board role to be inundated with emotional arguments to try to convince you that females need to accommodate biological males, but I believe you are concerned like most Alaskans about the future of girls' sports and have kept, and will keep, your eyes on the ball in these deliberations, using logic and reason rather than being swayed by emotional tugs on your heartstrings. You know like I do, that if the proposed bylaw change before you is *not* adopted, we will lose an even-playing field in sports for girls and females *will* face discrimination.

Alaska is not immune to the ever-increasing trend of biological males seeking spots on young women's sports teams and you are wise to address this issue earlier rather than later. Girls and women should not be robbed of the chance to be selected for a team, to have playing time on the court or the field, to win a championship, or to be awarded a college scholarship due to the physical advantages of biological males.

Research shows that even after a decade or more of testosterone suppression, the biological male still has a more massive heart, more extensive lung and oxygen capacity, larger bone structure, and greater muscle mass – 5 to 7 percent more. The difference between male and females' bodies is undeniable. Case in point: many male high school track and field athletes *consistently beat the times* of the best female Olympians who've trained intensely for years! Do not buy the argument that the bylaw change would preclude certain athletes from competition or equal access to sports. That simply is not true. Every. Single. Athlete would have ample opportunities to participate in school sports. And allow me here to put on the record that I am NOT transphobic. I care for, love, and value every person unconditionally, every student no matter what.

You may be told that this policy could increase depression and suicide among students with gender dysphoria. The truth is that depression rates and suicide ideation are *also* trending alarmingly upward among teenage girls. Trying to address mental health issues for a small group of youth through a policy that is unfair and unsafe for girls not only does not solve the depression and suicide issue for the small group, but it exacerbates the depression and suicide problem for the entire teenage female group while also creating unfair and unsafe conditions for girls which rob them of opportunities. Trying to fix one problem by creating another is clearly not the answer, especially when the attempt won't work anyway.

And let's not forget that the policy you will be setting will have ramifications as far as protecting girls' dignity and privacy in the locker room, the showers, and the bathrooms while participating in sports, not to mention for sleeping arrangements when teams travel for away-games.

In conclusion, honored Board Members, for decades, biological sex-specific separations in athletics have preserved competition and given girls fair opportunities for victories and athleticism. The great triumph and success of millions of females in athletics must not be discarded in the name of politics. Thank you for standing with our girls and young women, our female athletes by adopting the proposed bylaw change to protect girls' sports in our schools.

Good morning. My name is Michael Garvey, and I am representing the ACLU of Alaska, where I am Advocacy Director. I'm testifying in opposition to proposed bylaw revisions on separate sports divisions.

The proposal before the board is an alarming and unconstitutional attempt to politicize scholastic sports that will risk the wellbeing and privacy of all Alaskan students, especially those of girls.

One of the problems with a policy that explicitly bars transgender girls from competing in girls sports, based on biological sex, is implementation. It seems that ASAA would be in charge of either making biological sex determinations, or collecting sensitive information for all Alaskan children participating in sports. This may lead to transgender students being outed or subjecting children to invasive and unnecessary physical examinations.

Adopting this bylaw change would invite government sponsored bullying. With biological sex as the standard, any girl who appears "too masculine" or "too muscular" could be subject to rumors, negative social media comments, or calls for investigation. This already happens. The last thing ASAA should do is provide children more reasons to tear down their own self image.

Any argument that transgender girls would still be eligible to play in the second division doesn't hold water. Barring trans girls from competing on girls' teams is immensely damaging, even for students who don't want to join a sports team, because it tells children they can't live and play as their full selves. It would jeopardize the mental health of a group of children who are already at heightened risk of suicide, and deny them the ability to access opportunities comparable to their peers.

Finally, this policy change is unnecessary. ASAA Executive Director Billy Strickland said last year he knew of one openly trans athlete in Alaska high school sports history, and that a transgender girl has not taken away a scholarship from a cisgender girl in Alaska. He also said in 2016 that ASAA "wants students to be able to participate," and that in other associations that allowed transgender students to participate, "the kids could care less – it's more the grown-ups that get freaked out."

So what changed? Politics did. The grown-ups freaked out. Nothing requires ASAA to take this action or "get ahead" of state rulemaking that would be similarly unconstitutional. We urge this board to remember that ASAA's stated mission is to provide and promote opportunity. Trans students participate in sports for the same reasons other young people do: to challenge themselves, improve fitness, and be part of a team. Don't deny them that.

Sources:

<https://www.ktoo.org/2022/03/14/testimony-overwhelmingly-against-school-sports-ban-transgender-girls/>

<https://www.adn.com/sports/article/alaskas-new-transgender-policy-high-school-athletes-asaa-will-accept-gender/2016/05/05/>

Hello Board Members,

My name is Julie Smyth. I am writing this email today as the written portion of my verbal testimony that I am giving this morning. I oppose these proposed changes to the bylaw Article 7, section 1 & 2 and any other similar changes made to impact Transkids in our state.

I am a parent of a Trans student who will be affected by these changes. I already know what it is like to have a child consider attempt unaliving themselves because they feel like they have to fit in with gender rules that don't apply in my Alaska Native Culture. I also know what it is like to have a child flourish when they find a community of friends who accept them for who they are at school even if some of their family members struggle with this at home.

I mentioned that my Alaska Native Culture has different gender rules than the colonizers forced on my grandparents and parents. You can't tell which one that is just based on that alone, can you? My culture is Iñupiat. We have 3 genders and none of those genders are assigned based on what genitals you have, but rather what role you take in the community.

I also do not want anyone who is paid by any school district or the state to determine what genitals my children have in their underwear. It's none of your business.

Again, I oppose any changes that impact Transkids, especially Transkids from Alaska Native cultures. You do not want to be known as the Board Members who furthered colonization in the year 2023.

Thank you.

--

Kunaan Julie Smyth

My name is Joshua Knicely. I live in North Pole, Alaska, zip code 99705.

I have written and called to express my deep opposition to changes to the ASAA bylaw Article 7, section 1 & 2, and any other changes that target trans children in sports.

First, this is a huge violation of children's basic right to privacy by requiring educators and coaches to police whether a student is trans or not. Schools are not legally or ethically authorized to do so. What do you think is going to happen when parents learn that you want teachers and coaches to inspect their children's privates? Those teachers and coaches and the school are going to get sued, and not just by the parents of trans children.

Second, the proposed change imposes a narrow and unscientific definition of quote biological sex end quote that invalidates gender identity. If we look just at chromosomes, the thing so many transphobes like to talk about, there are far more than just two: XX, XY, XXX, XXY, XYY, XXXX, XXXY, XXYY, XYYY. There are even cases of people with just a single X chromosome. That's 10 different possible chromosomal expressions; speaking biologically, that's ten different sexes based just on chromosomes alone. That doesn't get into all the other biological metrics we could talk about. The science of biology rejected the sexual binary a long time ago.

Third, discriminatory resolutions like this one heighten trans students' risk of being bullied and attacked, which in turn increases their risk of mental health issues and suicide. To be extremely clear, that suicidality isn't caused by being trans, it's caused by the environment in which they live. The post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that is causing so many soldiers to kill themselves is the exact same thing trans people (and the LGBT+ community as a whole) are experiencing except for one key difference: soldiers get to the chance to feel safe when they come home, a chance to heal; trans people don't, and they won't until groups like the ASAA stop attacking them.

In conclusion, please stop wasting money by attacking trans kids, and instead work on something that actually matters, like unequal pay.

Also, I have to point out that requiring people to both submit an e-mail and call in for testimony seems like a purposeful choice to avoid public input. How many people have time on a Monday morning to wait an hour to testify? Most of us have jobs that make that impossible!

Thank you for your time.

Thank you,

Josh Knicely

Dear Alaska School Activities Association Board Members,

My name is Sydney Scout and I received my K-12 public education in the Anchorage School District: at Kincaid Elementary, Mears Middle, and Dimond High School. Since elementary school, I have been an athlete on competitive and school teams - I was on the track and volleyball teams at Mears Middle School and the soccer, tennis, track, and cross country running and skiing teams at Dimond High School. I played on the same competitive soccer team from fourth grade through the end of high school, and I still consider these teammates my family. Every sport I have taken part in simply emphasizes doing your best and having fun. Your effort to police the gender identities of those who choose to participate goes against everything these sports are about. In fact, it even goes against your stated values of "integrity, respect, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, and inclusivity."

Women's sports, particularly the team sports you speak of today, made me who I am. Being part of these teams provided me with physical and mental strength and confidence, and even more importantly taught me about working together across differences to achieve shared goals. Like too many in our state, my teen years were a time of instability and conflict in my home life, eventually resulting in me moving in with a soccer teammate at sixteen. My athletic endeavors and teammates have been a stable source of support in my life; no child should be excluded from this, especially due to their gender identity. Your proposal to ban trans girls from playing in contact sports will create divisions and threaten individuals' right to privacy in a space that is, first and foremost, about inclusivity and being part of a larger whole. There are many issues in women's sports, such as the continued lack of gender parity and funding, that would be helpful to have your attention on instead of fixating on political lightning rods that will only exclude and harm valued members of our community.

Thank you,

Sydney

My name is Chandra Poe, I live in Anchorage Alaska, and I oppose the changes proposed to ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1 & 11, and any other changes that target transgender children in sports.

First, thank you to all of the board members for your dedication to Alaska's students. As employees working in the public school system, all of you face real challenges in the face of funding shortages, aging infrastructure and continuing social and economic recovery of our communities from the pandemic. Thank you.

As the mother of a transgender girl, these public legislative and policy attacks feel deeply personal and make me fearful for my child's safety. My kid is not a threat. The amount of time our family has spent this year, standing up for our transgender child's basic human rights, is substantial. It is exhausting. And it is so, so damaging for our child to hear these persistent attacks on them by people in elected or appointed positions of leadership.

Transgender students who want to play – **children who just want to play** – are not a threat. They do no harm by their existence in this world or participation in school sports. These actions serve to weaponize sports to bully and dehumanize transgender children.

There is no evidence to support that transgender athletes are impacting girls' sports negatively. In fact, the opposite: according to a [report](#) from the Center for American Progress, when a state has a policy that includes transgender athletes, participation for cisgender women and girls is stronger.^[1] Further, banning trans women and girls from sport also puts cisgender women and girls at risk because anyone who falls outside of what is deemed stereotypically feminine may be forced to "prove" she is a woman or girl, which leads to invasive screenings and procedures to verify gender.

We are not talking about high-stake competitive sports here – we are talking about kids, and the goal should be encouraging participation. ASAA is a member of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Dr. Karissa Niehoff, NFHS chief executive officer, stated in May 2022 "What is the purpose of high school sports? It's the health and safety of participants, as well as developing life skills and citizenship. Is it to win? No. Is it to offer an opportunity? Yes." If any of our kids have the combination of talent, determination and dedication to move into collegiate, professional or Olympic level sports, there are existing policies in place at each of these levels to encourage fair and inclusive participation of all athletes.

The proposed bylaw changes will perpetuate government overreach and surveillance and will single out a vulnerable group of youth who already face extreme bullying and harassment simply for existing, and especially when participating in the sports they love. Actions like this make school less safe for transgender kids and will increase harassment and body policing for all girls.

Sport spaces help children develop critical life skills like communication, teamwork, and leadership — and give them a community of peers with whom they connect and can develop life-long friendships^[2]. These spaces are imperative for all kids, no matter their gender. We should be finding ways to create more opportunities for kids to be active and engaged with their peers, not denying them access.

Thank you for your time. I urge you to reject the proposed bylaw changes.

^[1] Goldberg, Shoshanna K. (2021) Fair Play: The Importance of Sports Participation for Transgender Youth. Center for American Progress. Available online at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fair-play/>.

^[2] Turnnidge, J., Côté, J., & Hancock, D. J. (2014). Positive youth development from sport to life: Explicit or implicit transfer?. *Quest*, 66(2), 203-217.

As a little girl in the 1980s I remember getting my hair braided for basketball by my grandmother and her telling me how very proud she was that I could play basketball at all. I was so confused. She turned me around and looked right at my eyes and told me she personally sacrificed so much to make sure me and my 4 sisters had every opportunity to play any sport we wanted, to go to any college and have the same scholarship opportunities as boys did. I will never forget that conversation because I remember laughing and saying of course girls can play basketball. She smiled and told me it was worth the fight and that she knew MY children would have everything because I was a fighter and would never let anyone take what she had one from them. Now here we sit, 40 years later, talking about taking girls' title 9 protections from them. We have been excluding boys from girls' sports since girls' sports were instituted, for a reason and we should continue to do so. If you fail to make these changes, girls' sports fail to exist, period. I beg ASSA to stand in the breach for our daughters. I beg ASSA to protect our daughters from biological males stealing their opportunities and successes from them. Please limit girls sports to biological girls and protect the rights our grandmothers fought for for us, do not let ASSA be yet another organization that becomes a tool of a noisy minority to destroy what was fought for and won, freedom for biological women to succeed in a fair play environment. Thank you.

Please excuse any errors, I am typing from my phone in order to quickly respond.

April Smith
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
Policy Committee Chair
Special Education Advisory Committee Member
Legislative Priorities Committee Member

Testimony from Sally Duncan, Two Rivers Alaska

Thank you for the opportunity to be able to testify today. I am speaking today on behalf of myself, my family, my friends and acquaintances who are concerned about the LGBTQ influence in our school activities. The thought of men being able to trapse into a girl's/women's bathroom, dressing room in schools, athletic clubs or anywhere else is abhorrent to me. I want my females protected not being made available to predators. If a man has the "feeling" that he is a woman, he needs psychological help. If he doesn't REALLY have that "feeling", but is a predator (which most are) you are placing our girls and women in a position which is not protective of them. It is your responsibility to protect our children from those who wish them ill. Please "FOLLOW THE SCIENCE"! A man cannot be a woman, the plumbing is different, the muscle make-up is entirely different, the heart is larger, the chromosomes are not the same, even if there are drugs given to these people, testosterone has a way of being a part of the body anyway and the ONLY REASON Lia Thomas won the swimming competition is because he is a man, not a woman. He could not compete with the men and so conned our system to let him compete against the women. Shameful! Again, I implore you to reject allowing men/boys to compete in women's sports. It will be lethal to the women in our country.

Hello, everyone! My name is Jamie Gibson, I go by they/them pronouns. I was born and raised on unceded lower Tanana Dene lands, also known as Fairbanks and I whole-heartedly oppose this proposed bylaw change and any other change that would target trans and gender non-conforming youth.

I, myself, am a non-binary lesbian. I have known I'm a lesbian, or some variation of queer, since I was 10. I discovered my true gender identity three years ago. After 15 years of struggling with my sexuality and not fitting in with "gender norms", I finally feel safe to be my authentic self, and that is only with the love and support from my amazing community and close friends. I have never felt safe to be myself around strangers, since I could inadvertently be putting a target on my back. From elementary all the way through high school, I was bullied and belittled for being a lesbian. I've been assaulted and molested due to my sexuality and these examples are just a handful of the awful things I experienced as a queer kid and closeted non-binary young adult.

Being trans or nonbinary in Alaska isn't easy, and these proposed bylaws target us without addressing any real problems in sports that this board exists to address.

Now, what Governor Dunleavy and his Board of Education have asked you to do is try to bypass the legislature and enshrine a bylaw that is completely transphobic and goes against everything ASAA stands for. You state that your values are "integrity, respect, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, and inclusivity", and this bylaw in no way aligns with those values.

When I was in high school, I was a tomboy and I identified as a cis-gender girl. I can't even imagine the fear I would have felt with the thought of having to "prove my gender" if I wanted to play any kind of contact sport, but you are proposing kids do this right now. You are telling kids that you care more about what private parts they have than their happiness. This bylaw change would put children in real danger; violating all students' privacy by forcing educators and coaches to identify and separate trans and queer youth from their peers, and would only hurt LGBTQ+ youths' health and safety.

In-Person Testimony: The bottom line is, all kids deserve the opportunity to play. Thank you for your service on this board making those opportunities possible, and I hope you will vote against these bylaw changes to continue making those opportunities accessible to all kids.

Phone Testimony: The bottom line is: trans girls are GIRLS, trans boys are BOYS, and all LGBTQ+ youth and adults deserve the same rights as straight, cis-gender people. Let kids play sports. Period. Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your vote against this proposed bylaw change.

Dear ASAA Board Members,

I am writing to urge you to vote against changes to the ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1 & 2, and any other changes that target trans children in sports.

Growing up I was involved in swimming, tennis, soccer, volleyball, and cross-country skiing. All these sports shaped me then and now in positive/healthy ways. Denying children the opportunity to participate in any sport of their choosing would be horrible for their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Children who identify as trans have enough to deal with without having to fight to belong to a sport that can provide so much.

Team sports do not just focus on physical ability, but rather on getting along with others who come from different cultures and backgrounds, setting athletes up for lifelong positive relationships at home, work, and in various communities. All students would miss out on these developmental interactions.

The ASAA mission is to “provide and promote opportunities through activities for all Alaska students.” The ASAA values are “integrity, respect, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, and inclusivity.” Excluding any student who identifies as trans goes against this mission and values. We all know that when students participate in sports, the benefits of higher self-esteem, better grades, and a sense of camaraderie are evident. I would hate for students who identify as trans to miss out on these benefits and at the same time face stigmatization and isolation by their peers.

If this change goes through, the educators and coaches would be policing whether a student is trans or not, which the school is not legally or ethically authorized to do under medical privacy laws, professional standards, and non-discrimination laws. Don't students have basic privacy rights? This change would violate those rights.

There is enough inequity between genders in sports like unequal funding, resources, and pay. As Alaskans and Americans, we should be focusing on these problems instead of encouraging baseless fears about trans athletes.

Please help provide positive opportunities for ALL students to thrive through sports by opposing changes that target students who identify as transgender.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Debevec
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

My name is Ruth Botstein. I live in Anchorage and I am testifying today as the mom of two kids who play competitive sports. I am strongly opposed to the proposal to ban transgender girls from participating on girls' sports teams.

When people ask me what I value about youth sports and what I hope my children will gain from their time as competitive athletes, the answers I give have nothing to do with how many games they win, how many goals they score, or whether they master any particular skill. Instead it's the life lessons that come from being part of a team: good sportsmanship, teamwork, bonds with teammates and coaches, respecting athletes, coaches, and referees even when you disagree with them, learning to work together with all kinds of different kids and prioritize the good of the team. When I talk to other parents, these are their values as well. We want our kids to become better people through sports, not just to improve their times and scores. And as so many commenters have noted, these are the expressed values of the ASAA itself: its mission is to "[p]rovide and promote opportunities through activities for *all* Alaska Students" and its organizational values are "[i]ntegrity, respect, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, [and] inclusivity."

The proposal to ban transgender girls from girls sports teams promotes the exact opposite of those values. Instead of respect and inclusivity, it's about exclusion and disrespect for kids who are different. Instead of promoting teamwork and integrity, this teaches hostility, division, and fear.

We cannot teach our children about the importance of teamwork, respect, and inclusivity by forcing them to exclude kids that are different. Transgender youth in Alaska are some of the most vulnerable and at-risk kids in our state. These are the kids who most need a team. They need strong relationships with peers and coaches who will demonstrate the values of inclusion and respect and teamwork. And because they do have different life experiences, these are also some of the kids that have the most to teach the rest of us about how to live these values. We all need these kids on our teams.

The ASAA should not use its power to exclude and bully the most vulnerable student athletes in Alaska. It should remain faithful to its values and provide and promote opportunities for *all* Alaska students through integrity, respect, and inclusivity. I urge you to reject this discriminatory and unsportsmanlike proposal.

My name is Linda Isaac. I live in Anchorage. My comments are in response to the proposed policy change that targets and excludes transgender girls from playing school sports.

The ability to participate fully in school life is critical for transgender students' wellbeing during adolescence.

For students in general, having the opportunity to participate in sports results in positive outcomes—better grades, greater homework completion, higher educational and occupational aspirations, and improved self-esteem.

Across the nation, schools and policymakers are coming to understand the following precepts about transgender students' participation in sports:

The right of transgender students to participate in sports calls for the same considerations of fairness and equal access as their classmates;

Not allowing transgender students to participate in sports violates their rights under Title IX, which has been interpreted under case law to include gender identity discrimination;

Providing equal opportunities in all aspects of school programming is a core value in education;

Athletics can provide a unique opportunity for inclusion for all students, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression. For schools and districts, failure to be inclusive of transgender students in sports not only denies trans students the benefits of participating on a sports team, it may result in costly and divisive litigation.

I hope you will vote No to this proposed by-law change.

Thank you.

My name is Olivia Lynn, I live in and was a student athlete in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

I oppose the changes to the ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1 & 2 and any other changes that target trans children in sports. These changes are downright creepy, our coaches, teachers, and school district should not be this concerned about what is in our students' pants. These children do Not deserve to have adults and their peers wondering "what they ACTUALLY are." It is an absolute violation of their bodily autonomy and personal privacy and would never be appropriate between adults in a professional setting. This is why I oppose the changes to the ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1 & 2 and any other changes that target trans children in sports.

Thank you for your time.

son

My name is Elaina Hanson.

I am here in support of the proposed bylaw change in Article 7. I believe in protecting biological girls sports. I am a high school senior here in Valdez, and competed in Nordic skiing all four years. Being on a sports team has allowed me to develop leadership skills, build my confidence, and helped me to realize that I can do hard things. Last year, a male teammate and I both placed 21st in our separate varsity races. His time was over 10 minutes faster than mine for the same distance. Even though he never expressed the desire to compete against the girls, if he had he would have won by over 2.5 minutes. Transgender athletes should still be allowed to compete in sports, but must not take away from biological girls. Thank you for your time and allowing me to speak.

Dear Trusted Board Members;

My name is Tonja Moser, and I am a lifelong resident of Alaska. I was an English and History teacher for 23 years, teaching for ten years at the middle school level, eleven years at the high school level, and two years at an international school in Bangkok, Thailand. I am the daughter of a 37-year teacher, the sister of a 27-year teacher, the niece of three uncles and one aunt who taught for a collective 128 years in Alaska, and the cousin of the current Mat-Su superintendent. I know education, and I know what's good for kids.

I am also an avid female athlete, one who appreciates the gifts of equality that were denied to my mother, grandmothers, and aunts but were granted to me by Title 9. I am someone who has raced, run, biked, and played many a game against top athletes, both male and female, both young and old. I continue to ski and mountain bike, play co-ed hockey in a 40 and over league and spend most every day on a trail, course, court, or mountain. I know competition, and I know winning and losing.

My message today is clear and simple-changing your bylaws to discriminate against an already marginalized group of kids is fear-based, mired in controversy, and one that will put lives at risk.

One of the greatest gifts collegiate sports offers someone is not the chance to win a race, push oneself, or be better than someone. It is the gift of teamwork, sportsmanship, and camaraderie. The chance to live as your authentic self, find your peers and your equals...and embrace your competition. None of these benefits change by allowing a trans person to be a part of that team. None of them.

Sure, one athlete might have the advantage of height in a basketball game, the advantage of speed in a running race, or an extra gasp of breath in a swim meet. But wasn't that the case when Carlos Boozer played basketball for JDHS? When Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce ran the 100m? When Michael Phelps won his 23rd gold medal? Aren't there always athletes who seem to rise above the others? Isn't it about the group, the team, the trying, and not the winning?

Our trans kids, who are athletes, are not trying to slaughter the competition. They are never trying to transition to win a high school game. They are trying to stay alive. Trying to find a place to do what they love and to be who they are. Why would we not allow an already marginalized group to participate in an activity praised for teaching sportsmanship and camaraderie? Why would we prevent a trans child from participating in the sport as the gender they identify on the one-off chance that person might have a slight athletic advantage? Isn't that exactly what we praise our top athletes for having? or are we not really all about teamwork and not playing to win but winning at playing?

Perhaps nothing brings it home more than the fact that I raised a trans daughter. The difference between my child living a life mired in depression and suicidal thoughts and finding truth and happiness in who she was when she joined the cheer team her senior year. I thank all of the

powers that be that my child was accepted as who she was and was embraced fully as an athlete. If your proposed bylaw changes had been in place a few years ago, my child might not be alive today. Ask yourself who would win and who would lose if you changed your bylaws to discriminate. Ask yourself, how would you feel if it were your child? And then, please vote no to a backward move toward exclusion and discrimination.

Sincerely,
Tonja Moser

Statement from Amanda and Dustin Stonecipher:

We are in strong support of protecting all biological girls and women's rights - simply put, it is a massive safety issue to allow biological boys and men to compete in sports for girls and women. It should not matter how the biological male identifies in regard to gender, as the science is pretty basic. Biological males inherently have a much larger body and muscle mass, larger hearts (muscle), larger bone structures, and in many cases, better oxygen flow than biological females. Even after years of testosterone suppression therapy, biological males maintain these physical advantages over females. This is supported by the anatomy and physiology studies and scientific evidence of human being biology.

Allowing biological males to compete against biological females can, and in some recent cases across the globe, cause serious injuries and/or death caused by the stronger and larger males when physical contact is part of the sport. This is simple science based on the physical traits listed above. It is why males have historically not been allowed to compete against females in mixed martial arts, boxing, and many other contact sports. There has been a recent case in which a high school biological female volleyball player suffered from a concussion, neck injury, long term impaired vision, partial paralysis on her right side, constant headaches, as well as anxiety and depression after a biological male who identifies as a transgender female spiked a volleyball directly to her face. Another case involved a biological male identifying and playing as a female on Guam High School's rugby team injured three (3) biological female players from Tiyan High School in April 2022. These are just two examples of many cases.

Not only is this a safety issue, but it is also a fairness issue. Since biological males have the physical advantages, biological women stand no chance to "win the gold". This is being proven over and over again in so many cases, such as: Riley Gaines, biological female swimmer who lost to transgender identifying biological male Lia Thomas; a Connecticut high school sprinter, Chelsea Mitchell, says she lost four state titles and called it a "devastating experience." In another case former women's cycling champion Hannah Arensman angrily quit the sport after losing to a biological male transgender athlete. Skateboarder Taylor Silverman spoke out in May 2022 regarding transgender participants in women's sports after losing a competition and prize money to a biological male who identified as transgender. Silverman stated, "I deserved to place first, be acknowledged for my win, and get paid. I reached out to Redbull and was ignored. I am sick of being bullied into silence." These are just a handful of so many cases where women and girls lost to the unfair-advantaged biological male transgender athletes.

For these biological girls and women, with every loss, it gets harder and harder to try again. Chelsea Mitchell in an interview with USA Today, "That's a devastating experience. It tells me that I'm not good enough; that my body isn't good enough; and that no matter how hard I work, I am unlikely to succeed, because I'm a woman." She also stated, "Girls and women shouldn't be stripped of their right to fair competition." The significant mental and emotional effects and scarring of such losses for these women cannot be dismissed without serious considerations. Their rights as woman are being diminished unfairly by the biological male

athletes and those who are supporting/allowing these individuals to compete in the women's sports categories.

As a prior law enforcement officer, I, **Amanda Stonecipher**, a biological female, recognized my physical limitations when it came to physical confrontations with biological males in the course of my duties, and my ability to be as strong as many of my biological male co-workers. I would not physically engage with many biological male suspects without either the use of less-lethal weapons or physical back up support from male co-workers. I knew my chances of losing were otherwise high and I certainly would face serious injury and/or death. This same basic logic must be applied to sports as well.

Please, we implore you to protect the rights and the safety of biological women and girls in sports by banning any biological male transgender athlete from competing in a women or girls' sports category. Biological males have no business competing in such sports. We are not "bullies", "bigots", or "transphobic" as so many in the political and media realm have labeled people with the views we have. We simply believe in fairness and safety for biological women and girls. They deserve it. Please stand strong against any bullying, yelling, name calling, threats, and simply non-scientifically based testimonies you will or may have already received from those that oppose the views we have expressed. More Alaskans support the rights of biological women than those that are the louder minority supporting the notion of "rights" of biological male transgender athletes are claiming to be entitled to in women's and girls' sports.

Thank You,

Amanda and Dustin Stonecipher
Fairbanks, Alaska

My name is John Ruyak, from the Anchorage community, and soon to be a parent of a student in the Anchorage public school system; I am writing in representing myself.

It has come to my attention that the ASAA seeks to ban trans girls from participating in girls sports. I am writing today to express my strong opposition of this change. Seeking this change shows that ASAA cares nothing for the health and well being of our students, and is only jumping on the band wagon of the horrendous national movement to enact policies that seek to erase trans youth. You are holding this up as an issue of fairness, you and I both know that your intentions are more nefarious than that. As a group that claims to be interested in student health and well being, I assume you are somewhat in tune with the notion that LGBTQ youth experience experience higher rates of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Discrimination and stigma cause and exacerbate these issues and create additional barriers to success, including lower academic achievement, higher absenteeism, and social isolation. Your proposed changes communicate to youth that some Alaskans do not value them, and will make these issues worse.

As it relates to sports, transgender children have variances in athletic ability, just as any other youth do. As reported by the ACLU, there is no evidence to support claims that allowing transgender student athletes to play on the team that fits their gender identity would affect the fairness of the sport or competition. In addition both the American Psychological Association and National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education officially support transgender and non-binary students full participation in sports. You and I both know, and as is supported by research including that of the US Department of Health and Human Services, adolescents participation in sports results in positive outcomes related to academic and general well being. Segregation of trans students or outright bans will do nothing but impact the well being of students in a system that you claim to serve. And it feels a lot like you are acting like a special interest group and are engaging in some level of exploitation regarding student Identity; I see that you one of the "services" you provide is to stop that from happening.

Don't enact these changes; they are wrong and hateful. You are on the wrong side of history.

John C. Ruyak

Hello ASAA Board:

My name is Selah Bauer and I live in Valdez and would like to comment at your upcoming meeting in Valdez, regarding whether or not to disallow trans girls (and likely trans boys) from athletic teams that match their identity.

Here is what I want to talk about during the open comments period of the Valdez ASAA meeting...

This is morally and ethically wrong to exclude trans kids from participating in school sports that can actually participate on competing teams. Trans kids already experience higher rates of death threats, oppression, anxiety, and suicide.

I am appalled that ASAA would even consider such an oppressive, hateful, resolution from the State Board of Education, as it directly violates your own organizational values of integrity and inclusivity. Who would do that? Your current values of inclusion and fairness help society and protect the vulnerable and oppressed.

But now your organization is considering adopting these hateful and exclusionary new sets of values because some transphobic entity wants you to help them carry out hate-filled values and implement harm to trans students across our beautiful state of Alaska.

Please say NO! to this resolution. You are in a place of leadership and power and you have the ability to protect trans kids in Alaska who are already so vulnerable and oppressed.

Thank you for your consideration,
Selah Bauer

May 1, 2023, ASAA Board of Director's Meeting Public Comment via Zoom

Jamie Chope

My name is Jamie Chope. J-A-M-I-E C-H-O-P-E I am an Anchorage resident. I am speaking for myself and my wife, Aadika Singh, A-A-D-I-K-A S-I-N-G-H. She is also an Anchorage resident.

We are a parent of one child. I have taught high-school in the Lower 48.

We ask you to do the right thing and vote against today's proposed bylaw changes referencing "biological" sex as the proposed changes are irrelevant to ASAA's mission and should not be approved. The proposed changes could call on sports administrators to remove students from their teams and ultimately the proposed changes will negatively impact our child. ASAA cannot keep its mission to provide opportunities for Alaska students and at the same time acquiesce to pressure from Alaska's Governor and a resolution passed by his [State] Board of Education.

Together, we participated in seven different high-school junior varsity and varsity sports (that includes multiple contact sports). We anticipate that our child will participate in multiple sports as well. Playing on inclusive sports teams shaped who we are, giving us confidence and self-esteem, teaching us to juggle competing priorities and thrive as athlete-scholars, and allowed us to develop essential leadership, grit, and other life skills. And having teammates and competitors that were different in many ways from our group of friends and immediate cohort enriched our lives greatly and we expect the same will be true for our child. Should a sports administrator remove our child or our child's teammate from a team for no basis but this policy change, we would be devastated. Our lives in Alaska would be diminished and we would reconsider whether our young family could continue to make this state the place we live and work.

Thank you.

My name is Sara Caldwell-Kan (spelled Sara Caldwell-Kan), pronouns she/they. I am an Anchorage resident and parent of an incoming student into the ASD school system. I am representing myself.

I am calling to express my opposition to the proposed bylaws in Article 7: sections 1 and 11, that exclude transgender girls from sports teams. ASAA is reaching beyond its role as a regulatory body and should not be enacting exclusionary laws that circumvent our democratic process.

First and foremost, I am disgusted and saddened by the ongoing attacks on trans people, especially trans youth in Alaska. If we cared about the health and well-being of Alaskans, we would stop hate and discrimination. This attempted change in policy falls in line with hateful rhetoric that is so easily manifested in physical violence. This hate also fuels more hate that is clearly a cause of distress among our queer and trans youth. This is why rates of self-harm and suicide is highest among transgender non-binary and gender non-conforming youth. For all of you who are parents, you better be thinking about what it would feel like for hateful politicians and special interest groups to rally hate-filled people SPECIFICALLY against YOUR CHILD.

Second, I was a high school and college athlete myself. Sports were incredibly important to me. I found my community and a productive way to spend my time. I was a fairly competitive athlete, and still, many many others were far better than me. And isn't that the point? It's a competition and it isn't always fair. Some people have more resources like private coaches, and some people have more lung capacity. This conversation about fairness is a distraction from the far more important issues here: sports can be a lifeline for students and the connections we build in sports are more important than winning a high school game or meet. If we want to talk about genetic disposition, we won't be able to find a quote "fair" line.

Ultimately, if you cared about the health of Alaska's youth, you would not target our trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming youth. Get out of here with your hate. I thought Alaska was about living our lives the way we choose, not hateful special interests telling some people they are wrong to be themselves. Trans girls are girls, and all children should be allowed to play sports.

Hello all, I am Jesse Schnabel
I'm a Fairbanks resident and a graduate from West Valley High School.

I oppose the changes made to the ASAA bylaw Article 7, Sections 1&11 and any other changes made that target trans youth.

This change only serves to stigmatize transness in a political climate that's already hostile towards trans people. It undermines the health and safety of trans students, isolating them from their peers and its discriminatory resolutions like the one altering bylaw Article 7 that drag down the mental health of trans people and contribute to an increase in the stigmatization, bullying, and aggressive behavior towards trans students. Ultimately, this leads to an increased risk of suicide.

As I'm sure you know, physical activity on a team has so many benefits, and not allowing trans students to participate in sports in a way that aligns with their gender will just drive them away. This robs them of the really important opportunity for building confidence in themselves and building camaraderie with their fellow athletes.

I understand that some may be concerned about the fairness of trans women participating in sports in a way that aligns with their gender, however, there is no data to suggest that trans athletes have an advantage over their competitors. In fact, according to the Executive Director of the Mount Sinai Center for Transgender Medicine and Surgery, a person's genetic makeup and internal and external reproductive anatomy are really not useful indicators of athletic performance.

The mission of ASAA is to provide and promote opportunities through activities for *all* Alaska students. Trans athletes are included in that. If ASAA truly values respect and inclusivity, as it claims to do in the core values of the organization, it needs to extend that respect to trans athletes and allow them to participate in sports in a way that aligns with their gender identity.

Thank you for your time, and I reiterate that I oppose these proposed anti-trans bylaw changes.

My name is Michael Rzeszut. I am the parent of 3 cisgender males and 1 cisgender female....all of whom have actively participated in multiple ASAA sports activities. I also have a transgender youth in my extended family whom I care about also. I am writing to you to articulate a concern. I am concerned about proposed changes to the ASAA program related to participation of transgender females (cismale) in girls sport programs. Transgender female (cismale) athletes have a different body/musculature structure (regardless of blockers/hormone therapy being taken) that present an unfair advantage in their participation in womens sports. Allowing transfemales to compete in cisfemale sports would unfairly take opportunity away from cisfemales....both to excel and enjoy the sport, as well as potential scholarship opportunities for further education. I strongly urge you not to take opportunities away from cisgender females. Womens and Mens sport activities should be restricted to participants based on their cisgender. As an alternative, I would suggest that ASAA consider creating a 3rd 'coed' category for sports where participants (cis or trans) could participate and their gender would be irrelevant.

Sincerely,

Michael Rzeszut

I am writing to speak against any changes to student policy which would bar transgender students from participating in sports that correlate with their gender identity.

You said it yourself—in your entire time as an executive director of ASAA, you are only aware of 1 student that was playing sports.

This proposal is seeking a solution for a problem that doesn't really exist.

It only serves to single out and further stigmatize gender-non-conforming kids that are already struggling.

So a new separate division of sports for 1, 2, 3 kids? Not happening.

The argument about this being a safety issue is silly. There are all shapes and sizes of kids that want to turn out for school sports across all gender spectrums.

We don't prevent larger biological girls from competing against smaller biological girls, do we?

I am also concerned with the way the state board's resolution came about with no public notice or comment, disinformation within the resolution, and the appearance of collaboration with anti-trans legislator Shelley Hughes who was unsuccessful in targeting trans kids through her failed legislation.

Bottom line—let kids play.

Let them figure out who they are in their own good time and in their own way.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Paige R. Hodson, SRA

Dear ASAA Board Members,

I wanted to give these comments during public testimony this morning, but I couldn't make the call due to my work schedule. I hope to still share my testimony with you via this email:

Mr. Chair and Members of the ASAA Board,

My name Keri Anderson.

I applaud the Alaska State Board of Education for passing the very important resolution for the separation of males and females, as designated at birth, in sports to maintain competitive fairness. Our girls should continue to enjoy the benefits that title IX created 50 years ago!

I am female and I am a former athlete. I have also raised 5 daughters who have all been highly involved in sports their entire lives. I have coached girls sports for over 15 years. I am a witness of the many great benefits sports have in the lives of girls! We must protect these opportunities for them by not allowing male bodied athletes, and the physical advantages they have, to ever replace even one single girl.

I have always been proud and grateful that my daughters have had sports so readily available to them. Thanks to the pioneers of Title IX, they have had a right to play female sports and compete at a level playing field, just as their male counterparts have done.

Biological males entering female sports should never be allowed, even under the claim that they are transgender. There is a clear difference in their physicality that favors them, and they will take the place of deserving girls on team selections, winners' podiums, awards, all tourney teams, record holdings, etc. There is no good reason for any girl to be displaced by a male bodied person in female sports.

I have heard some say that this is not an issue here in Alaska. I'm here to tell you that it absolutely is. I have personally witnessed it. I was at the state track meet a few years ago when I watched an athlete that I had coached in another sport, lose a place on the podium to a male bodied athlete who came in just ahead of her in the race. I also watched a male bodied athlete dominate a position in girls varsity soccer. I watched these male bodied athletes as they used a physical advantage over the female athletes on the field and affect the overall game and performance to their favor. I have also felt the negative emotion from female athletes as their locker room space was compromised by males who felt these blurred lines provided access for them into female spaces. I have found most girls stay quiet with their frustration in these matters, as it is part of their teenager mentality to not want to rock the boat on social issues! They experience bullying if they take a stand and express how they feel.

This practice of allowing males who identify as girls to compete with girls is being sold as "inclusion."

It is actually EXCLUSION - for girls:

Excluding the next girl on the bench from playing.
Excluding the next place winner in a competition.
Excluding a place on the podium
Excluding the next girl for a scholarship opportunity.
Excluding the next girl in line for an opportunity of advancement.
Excluding the next girl's voice in a team leadership role.
Excluding an entire group of young ladies as they eventually just give up and lose confidence due to the overall discomfort that will happen as their courts, locker rooms, overnight trips, and culture in general begins to deteriorate.

Please don't let even ONE girl experience EXCLUSION on her playing field so that a male bodied athlete can take her spot. Don't wait for this to become more of an issue before you act. Be proactive in the preservation of girls sports here in Alaska!

Do not crumble under negative pressure from sources that do not respect women and the progress they have enjoyed in athletics.

Please pass an ASSA Board Policy to preserve the designated female-at-birth sports and protect an even playing field for them! The great state of Alaska will emerge as a leader for women in our nation!

Thank you for spending time on this important matter!

Keri Anderson

To the ASAA Board:

My name is Janice P. Michaud-Whalen, and I'd like to address the idea of deciding youths' sports participation based on birth certificate gender. I am a retired teacher who, in addition to teaching in Oregon and Alaska, coached Jr. High track and field, volleyball, and girl's basketball, and I coached Special Olympics skiing, track and field, and girl's basketball. I am also a mother, grandmother, ally and advocate for LGBTQIA+ people.

I urge the ASAA to allow students to participate in sports according to the gender with which they identify. To have coaches and other authority figures decide what gender a student fits is invasive and unnecessarily harmful. I hope it is not your intent to punish youth who identify other than how you may want them to identify. All students, including trans students need to be protected from rules that are hateful and exclusionary. In my experience, students are very able to decide about their own gender identity, and their decisions should be honored. Teens and young adults have a big enough job figuring out who they are without others muddling and imposing their own limited views on them. Please let students participate as the gender with which they identify.

Thank you.

Good morning, my name is Rebecca Bernard, I live in Anchorage, and I'm here to speak against the proposed bylaw changes to Article 7, Sections 1 & 11, and any other changes that target trans youth in sports. I'm the mother of two children who I adore, one of whom is transgender. I feel fiercely that my trans daughter deserves the same rights and access to opportunities as every other student. This proposed bylaw change goes against this principle and I urge you to reject it. This policy is harmful to a population that is already highly vulnerable. Separating trans kids out from their peers on sports teams puts a target on their back, exposing them to bullying and harassment. Many aren't out and will choose not to play sports if this is the alternative. It's discriminatory and deprives trans students of all the learning and growth that comes from playing on a sports team. The idea that boys would choose to identify as girls to gain a competitive advantage is ludicrous, and is being driven by fear and ideology, not reality. What's more, the participation of trans students in school sports simply hasn't caused problems in Alaska. This is an issue being imported from Outside agitators by a handful of people with a political agenda. And it's a backdoor way of implementing a policy that failed to garner enough support in the legislature to become democratically enacted law. Have Alaska students asked for this? I doubt it. I'd be willing to bet that if you held this hearing in any Anchorage high school at a time when students aren't in class, you'd have dozens of students speaking up for their trans classmates and telling you that this policy is unnecessary and a waste of your time. ASAA has a responsibility to provide and support sports and other activities for all students, and inclusivity is one of its values. This policy would isolate and discriminate against trans students, a very small group that is already vulnerable. This is the wrong direction for this organization. I urge you to stop spending time on this harmful issue and reject these bylaw amendments. Thank you.