

TRANSGENDER CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS FOR THE SAME REASONS AS ANYONE ELSE — FOR THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS, THE INVALUABLE LESSONS OF TEAMWORK AND DISCIPLINE, AND THE LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS.

Transgender inclusion in sports has long been the standard in Minnesota. For almost a decade, the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) has had a policy allowing transgender students to compete in sports – and they have, without issue. In fact, since the MSHSL adopted a formal policy permitting students to play on teams based on their gender identity, girls participation rates in athletics have increased. This is not unique to Minnesota. The same has happened in other states.

Recently, anti-LGTBQ hate groups have launched an aggressive legal, legislative, and messaging campaign to perpetuate the false notion that transgender girls participating in sports pose an existential threat to girls' sports. This is simply not true. This push has elevated harmful narratives about transgender youth into the public sphere, including personal, and at times deeply inappropriate conversations about childrens' bodies. And as we know, there's no such thing as hate that stays neatly focused on one group. **The rigid hyperscrutiny used to discuss the bodies of transgender, gender nonconforming and intersex kids today are already familiar to many Black and brown girls, whose bodies have been scrutinized and castigated for generations.**

For state lawmakers to discriminate against kids and ban them from playing because they're transgender denies them vitally important childhood experiences and all the lessons they teach. Like kids everywhere, transgender kids thrive when they are treated with dignity and respect. Being a kid is hard enough. We don't need politicians making it even harder for kids who are transgender and singling them out for increased bullying and harassment.

There are very real threats to girls' and women's sports – racism, pay inequities, sexual abuse, and lack of athletic opportunities in schools, to name a few -- but transgender athletes aren't among them.

Girls' sports are stronger when we prioritize equity and inclusion. If legislators are interested in supporting girls' and women's sports, they should focus their energy on addressing systemic racism and sexism, fully funding public schools, and passing comprehensive sex and consent education – all of which would go a long way toward supporting girls and women in sports.

MESSAGING GUIDANCE

Highlight that transgender inclusion in sports has long been the standard in Minnesota, across the country, and around the world

- The Minnesota State High School League has had a policy allowing transgender students to compete in sports for almost a decade, and this has been happening without issue.
 - In fact, since the Minnesota State High School League adopted a formal policy permitting students to play on teams based on their gender identity, girls participation rates in athletics have *increased*, not decreased. This is not unique to Minnesota; the same happened in other states
- Organizations, including the International Olympic Committee, the NCAA, and the Minnesota State High School League, along with numerous international and national sports governing bodies, all have policies allowing transgender athletes to compete.

Emphasize shared values of sport

- Transgender girls participate in sports for the same reasons as anyone else — **for the physical and mental health benefits, the invaluable lessons of teamwork and discipline, and the lifelong friendships.**
- They're kids, let them play!

Alleviate concerns

- Minnesota has had policies allowing transgender students to participate in sports – **and the policies have been working successfully for years.** Blanket bans on transgender student athletes threaten to roll back the progress we've made.
- The head of the Minnesota High School League and the Minnesota Department of Education have both spoken out against this ban, asserting that it is unnecessary.

Illustrate the harms of banning transgender youth from sports

- **Minnesota decided long ago that discrimination is wrong**, and that everyone should have the same opportunities to succeed in life – and that includes transgender youth.
- Transgender kids want the opportunity to play sports for the same reason other kids do: to be a part of a team where they feel like they belong. We shouldn't discriminate against kids and ban them from playing because they're transgender.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

DO TRANSGENDER GIRLS INHERENTLY HAVE AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE?

No. Every person's body is different. There's no scientific evidence that the average transgender athlete is any bigger, stronger, or faster than the average cisgender athlete. Transgender girls are girls. Applying regulations meant for elite athletic associations to all students is unnecessary. **Minnesota has had policies allowing students to play on sports teams that align with their gender identity for almost a decade--and these policies have increased participation rates in girl's sports, protected transgender youth, and ensured a level playing field for all students.**

BUT AREN'T TRANSGENDER GIRLS JUST ALWAYS BIGGER AND STRONGER THAN CISGENDER GIRLS?

No. While **every** athlete's body is different, transgender girls are not inherently stronger or bigger than cisgender girls. Further, most kids play sports to learn the values of teamwork, self-discipline, and to just plain have fun.

BUT AREN'T BOYS BODIES JUST ALWAYS BIGGER AND STRONGER THAN GIRLS?

When discussing transgender people's participation in sports, it is not appropriate to compare boys and girls. Transgender girls are girls and transgender boys are boys. When transgender girls compete in girl's sports, there are no boys or men competing.

WOMEN HAVE FOUGHT SO HARD — AND ARE STILL FIGHTING — TO GET THE RECOGNITION THEY DESERVE IN SPORTS. IF TRANS GIRLS ARE ALLOWED TO COMPETE, WON'T THEY TAKE OVER?

Transgender girls are not perpetrating fraud to dominate in sports; they're looking to be a part of a sport, just like any other kid who plays. The reality is that trans girls are very much underrepresented in sport. Only 12% of transgender girls, and only 14% of transgender boys, play organized sports--compared to 68% of all youth. Further, a 2017 [study](#) found that about 3% of Minnesota high school students identify as transgender or gender nonconforming.

SAY THIS, NOT THAT

<i>Instead of this</i>	<i>Say This</i>	<i>Why?</i>
Compete/ Competition	Participate/Participation	Talking about transgender youth “competing” activates zero-sum, win/loss thinking.
Trans	Transgender	Not everyone knows who we’re talking about when we shorten to trans
Criminalizing	“Threatening to arrest and criminally prosecute...”	Criminalizing is a word mostly used by the progressive base, so this word could signal to moderates/undecideds that they should be against trans inclusion because of politics
People/Minnesotans/biological males	Children/kids/transgender girls/transgender youth	Activates protective parents, reminds people who these bills are targeting (<u>children</u>).
Testosterone/ Biological males/competitive advantage	Pivot. Let’s remember what this is really about: whether LGBTQ kids are treated fairly across all areas of life.	This opens the door to fixation on transgender children’s bodies, and also draws associations with doping.
Opening with discrimination	Use discrimination as a <i>closing argument</i>	Calling opponents of protections for transgender children “bigoted” or “hateful” alienates those who are honestly wrestling with their feelings.
“I believe in science, and science says...”	It can be hard to understand what it means to be transgender, especially if you’ve never met a transgender person. And it’s common to have questions at first. But we can all agree that transgender kids should be treated with dignity and respect, just like everyone else.	Scientists have repeatedly said there is no single biological factor that determines sex, and sex assigned at birth is not the sole determinant of gender. This is a bad faith statement brought by people who most definitely do not believe in, or have any interest in, science. Medical organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the Endocrine Society and the American Psychiatric Association all recognize and affirm transgender youth. Unless you’re an actual doctor or scientist, resist going down “science” rabbit holes!

SAY THIS, NOT THAT

Source: OutFront Minnesota

<i>Instead of this</i>	<i>Say This</i>	<i>Why?</i>
“Transgender s ” “ <u>a</u> Transgender”	Transgender	Transgender should be used as an adjective, not as a noun. Do not say, “Tony is a transgender,” or “The parade included many transgenders.” Instead say, “Tony is a transgender man,” or “The parade included many transgender people
“Transgender <u>ed</u> ”		The adjective transgender should never have an extraneous “-ed” tacked onto the end. An “-ed” suffix adds unnecessary length to the word and can cause tense confusion and grammatical errors. It also brings transgender into alignment with lesbian, gay, and bisexual. You would not say that Elton John is “gayed” or Ellen DeGeneres is “lesbianed,” therefore you would not say Chaz Bono is “transgendered.”
“Transgenderism”	nothing	This is not a term commonly used by transgender people. This is a term used by anti-transgender activists to dehumanize transgender people and reduce who they are to “a condition.” Refer to being transgender instead, or refer to the transgender community. You can also refer to the movement for transgender equality.
“sex change,” “pre-operative,” “post-operative”	transition	Referring to a “sex-change operation,” or using terms such as “pre-operative” or “post-operative,” inaccurately suggests that one must have surgery in order to transition. Avoid overemphasizing surgery when discussing transgender people or the process of transition.
“biologically male,” “biologically female,” “genetically male,” “genetically female,” “born a man,” “born a woman”	assigned male at birth assigned female at birth	Problematic phrases like those above are reductive and overly-simplify a very complex subject. As mentioned above, a person’s sex is determined by a number of factors - not simply genetics - and one’s biology does not “trump” one’s gender identity. Finally, people are born babies - they are not “born a man” or “born a woman.”
“Transsexual”	transgender	An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. Still preferred by some people who have permanently changed - or seek to change - their bodies through medical interventions (including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries). Unlike transgender, transsexual is not an umbrella term. Many transgender people do not identify as transsexual and prefer the word transgender. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers. If preferred, use as an adjective: transsexual woman or transsexual man.”

NEVER SAY

Deceptive

Posing

Confused

Fooling

Trap

Tricking

Pretending

Masquerading

WHY: Gender identity is an integral part of a person’s identity. Do not characterize transgender people as “deceptive,” as “fooling” or “trapping” others, or as “pretending” to be, “posing” or “masquerading” as a man or a woman. Such descriptions are defamatory and insulting.

DEFINITIONS

Word	Definition
Transgender (adj.)	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the transgender umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms - including transgender. Some of those terms are defined below. Use the descriptive term preferred by the individual. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to change their bodies. Some undergo surgery as well. But not all transgender people can or will take those steps, and a transgender identity is not dependent upon medical procedures.
Cisgender	A term used by some to describe people who are not transgender. “Cis-” is a Latin prefix meaning “on the same side as,” and is therefore an antonym of “trans-.” A more widely understood way to describe people who are not transgender is simply to say non-transgender people.
Transgender man	People who were assigned female at birth, but identify and live as a man may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten it to trans man. (Note: trans man, not “transman.”) Some may also use FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male. Some may prefer to simply be called men, without any modifier. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.
Transgender woman	People who were assigned male at birth but identify and live as a woman may use this term to describe themselves. They may shorten to trans woman. (Note: trans woman, not “transwoman.”) Some may also use MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female. Some may prefer to simply be called women, without any modifier. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.
Transition	Altering one’s sex assigned at birth not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition includes some or all of the following personal, medical, and legal steps: telling one’s family, friends, and co-workers; using a different name and new pronouns; dressing differently; changing one’s name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) one or more types of surgery. The exact steps involved in transition vary from person to person. Avoid the phrase “sex change.”