

## An Open Letter in Support of Transgender Student-Athletes

We, the undersigned, are facilitators of the National Collegiate Athletics Association's (NCAA) [Division III LGBTQ OneTeam Program](#), which is a national training program that fosters LGBTQ+ inclusion in NCAA Division III athletics, and members of the NCAA's Division III LGBTQ Working Group. Given the recent rise in legislation that is focused on excluding transgender people from athletics across the country, we have decided to use our collective voice to condemn such actions. We call on elected officials across the country to immediately halt legislation that is aimed at excluding transgender youth and young adults from equal and equitable participation in sport.

In our role with the NCAA's LGBTQ OneTeam Program, we train coaches, athletics administrators, and student-athletes across the whole of Division III athletics. This program is aimed at helping to understand the importance of LGBTQ inclusion in college athletics, while also identifying strategies and best practices for institutions and conferences to better ensure that all student-athletes--regardless of their sexuality, gender identity, and/or gender expression--can participate in an inclusive and safe athletic climate. We cannot, in good conscience, fail to speak out at this critical moment.

In the past several weeks, actions--which are aimed at excluding transgender youth and young adults from equal and equitable participation in sport--have been taken by elected officials in [several states](#), including Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia. At the time of this writing, the Governors of [Arkansas](#), [Idaho](#), [Mississippi](#), and [Tennessee](#) have already signed such dangerous legislation into law.

Legislation aimed at categorically banning transgender people--and particularly transgender girls and women--from sport is inherently discriminatory. Such legislation is often "informed" by hate and misinformation rather than science, and it is most certainly "informed" by [fear instead of fact](#). Conversely, trans-inclusive policies, such as those established by the [NCAA](#) and the [International Olympic Committee](#) (IOC), are better informed by the current scientific evidence, and this evidence shows that transgender women do not have an inherent competitive advantage over cisgender women.

Furthermore, discriminatory legislation that is aimed at excluding transgender people from sport has a number of [serious consequences](#) for transgender students. Such legislation dehumanizes transgender students, refuses them the opportunity to participate equally and equitably in athletics, undermines their support in educational settings, damages their mental health, and ultimately harms these students, while also contributing to an exclusionary athletic environment and a more hostile school climate for all students.

We immediately call for 1) an end to such legislation in all states and 2) a repeal of such laws in Arkansas, Idaho, Mississippi, and Tennessee. And finally, we also encourage our legislators to better consider the [NCAA best practices](#) and importance of an inclusive athletic environment for all student-athletes.

Sincerely,  
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