



May 25, 2021

Dear member on the Committee of Education,

As President of a union representing Wisconsin public school teachers and staff as well as faculty and staff in the Wisconsin Technical College System and University of Wisconsin, I am writing to oppose bills trying to stop transgender athletes from participating in sports at both the high school and college level.

Transgender students, like any other students, deserve the chance to learn teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership and self-discipline, and to build a sense of belonging with their peers. When we include transgender students in sports, it benefits everyone.

Any legislation that prevents transgender students from fully participating in sports aligned with their identity won't make sports safer or fairer for any student—it would only stigmatize and exclude a group of students who already face high levels of discrimination. Transgender students currently face disturbing rates of bullying, rejection, and even violence. Furthermore, this type of bill doesn't solve any actually existing problem. Trans kids have played sports consistent with their gender identity for a long time. The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association instituted transgender guidelines nearly a decade ago. At the high school level, 16 states already allow transgender kids to play sports consistent with their gender identity, and at the college level the NCAA has a trans-inclusive policy, too.

Every Wisconsinite should be treated with dignity and respect, including transgender young people. Wisconsin's teachers, faculty, and staff oppose any bill that hurts transgender youth from passing out of the legislature. We need legislation that helps struggling students, rather than targeting them. Let me know if you have any concerns or would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Kim Kohlhaas
President, AFT-Wisconsin