



## Resolution on Inclusion of Youth who Identify as Transgender and Gender Diverse (TGD) in Sports

*An official statement from the Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice (formerly the American Orthopsychiatric Association)*

The Global Alliance embeds its work in principles of human rights, including nondiscrimination, respect and dignity, and fairness. In recognition of this commitment, we are deeply concerned with recently passed or proposed legislation and actions aimed to exclude and stigmatize transgender and gender diverse (TGD) student-athletes.

Transgender girls/women have been specifically targeted in much of this legislation. Such legislation is the latest in an onslaught of oppressive and degrading laws that seek to exclude and stigmatize youth who identify as TGD.

Many of these proposals require student-athletes whose gender is questioned to complete a medical examination and/or provide information attesting to hormone levels and evidence of an operation. Such invasive and demeaning policies may deter students who identify as TGD from participating in school and recreational sport.



We know that:

- The right to play is protected under Article 31 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.
- Participating in team sports improves the health and well-being of student-athletes.
- Over 110 corporations including Amazon, Google, Nike, and PayPal, have signed onto a statement opposing anti-trans and other anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.

And yet

- In the United States, as of May 2021, almost 35 states have proposed or adopted legislation preventing youth who identify as TGD from competing in girls' sports.

The right to play is fundamental to the human experience. Play facilitates social, emotional, and cognitive skills and promotes maximization of human potential. When laws seek to exclude youth who identify as TGD from school sports, they also threaten a youth's education and access to safe spaces. Play and sport help youth stay in school, overcome prejudice, and build resilience from abuse and discrimination.

Sport participation is associated with a decrease in depressive and anxiety symptoms, lower levels of perceived stress, and improvement in perceived mental health. The social connectedness inherent in team sports helps further foster athletes' well-being. Limiting the ability of TGD-identified youths to benefit from these positive impacts is unjust, especially as research shows depression and anxiety, suicidal behaviors, and homelessness are common among youth who identify as TGD. There is no evidence that the participation of students who identify as TGD in recreational and school sports has negatively impacted the success of cisgender athletes. Nor does it inhibit the experience of other youth in sport. Further,

the arguments in support of legislation of 'fairness' and 'physiological advantage' are not based on scientific evidence or harm to the success of cisgender athletes. However, the potential negative impact of prohibiting athletes who identify as TGD from participation is clear.

The extreme increase in transphobic legislation is not based on widespread public concerns or evidence suggesting the need for action. In fact, governing bodies such as the NCAA have expressed concern with policies restricting the

inclusion of athletes who identify as TGD from sports competition. Student athletes have also largely supported the inclusion of transgender females in sports competitions. And yet, despite strong evidence highlighting the importance and benefits of participation in sport, there have been a significant number of proposals limiting participation in activities that are known to promote health and well-being.

The Global Alliance calls for federal law that prohibits discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity, to protect and promote inclusion and well-being for student-athletes who identify as TGD. Although executive orders signed by President Biden have overturned some of the anti-trans policies set forth by the previous administration, legislation is needed to ensure protection. It is imperative that legislation is grounded in efforts to facilitate environments that are safe, inclusionary, free of discrimination, and respects the dignity of all individuals. Teams that embody these values are healthier and better for all participants.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Additional Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Civil Liberties Union (<a href="https://www.aclu.org">https://www.aclu.org</a>) and <a href="https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/the-coordinated-attack-on-trans-student-athletes/">https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/the-coordinated-attack-on-trans-student-athletes/</a></li> <li>• Human Rights Campaign (<a href="https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/breaking-2021-becomes-record-year-for-anti-transgender-legislation">https://www.hrc.org/press-releases/breaking-2021-becomes-record-year-for-anti-transgender-legislation</a>)</li> <li>• NCAA (<a href="https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/ncaa-board-governors-statement-transgender-participation">https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/ncaa-board-governors-statement-transgender-participation</a>)</li> <li>• Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) (<a href="https://www.glaad.org/">https://www.glaad.org/</a>)</li> <li>• Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) (<a href="https://pflag.org/">https://pflag.org/</a>)</li> <li>• National Center for Transgender Equality (<a href="https://transequality.org/">https://transequality.org/</a>)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Relevant articles from the <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i></b></p> <p>Hope, D. A., Mocarski, R., Bautista, C. L., &amp; Holt, N. R. (2016). Culturally competent evidence-based behavioral health services for the transgender community: Progress and challenges. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>, 86(4), 361–365. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000197">https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000197</a></p> <p>Redfern, J. S., Barnes, A., &amp; Chang, J. (2016). Psychosocial, HIV, and health care management issues impacting transgender individuals. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>, 86(4), 366–372. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000190">https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000190</a></p> <p>Scout, N. F. N. (2016). Transgender health and well-being: Gains and opportunities in policy and law. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>, 86(4), 378–383. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000192">https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000192</a></p> <p>Tanis, J. (2016). The power of 41%: A glimpse into the life of a statistic. <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>, 86(4), 373–377. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000200">https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000200</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How you can help</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Join our LGBTQ+ Task Force (<a href="https://www.bhjustice.org/lgbtq">https://www.bhjustice.org/lgbtq</a>)</li> <li>• Reach out to state legislators, when applicable, to oppose anti-transgender legislation and/or to encourage protections for youth who identify as transgender (<a href="https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/">https://openstates.org/find_your_legislator/</a> [state legislators] or <a href="https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members">https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members</a> [U.S. legislators])</li> <li>• Reach out to governing bodies for school and club sports to encourage inclusion of student-athletes who identify as TGD</li> <li>• Advocate for youth who identify as transgender in your local community by challenging anti-LGBTQ remarks or jokes and speaking out against bullying</li> <li>• Act as a resource to local schools or educational programs to provide information on fostering affirmative environments</li> </ul>	

*Principally drafted by Monica Landers with contributions from Gita Jaffe and the Global Alliance LGBTQ+ task force.*