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To: Interested Parties
From: National Women's Law Center
Re: New Data on Voter Attitudes on Banning Trans Student Sports Participation
Date: June 15, 2026

New polling data shows voters are skeptical of stripping legal protections from transgender student athletes or allowing the Supreme Court to set policy for all school districts on the issue. Ahead of an anticipated decision in Supreme Court cases testing the legality of state bans on trans youth participating in school sports, **only 29% of all voters believe that the U.S. Supreme Court should decide official policy on whether a trans student should be allowed to participate in school sports.**

In contrast, the majority of voters surveyed prefer that athletic associations or local school officials make determinations about trans student eligibility. The poll found that 55% of all voters believe that athletic associations or local school officials—such as a coach, school administrator, or school board—should set the official eligibility policy for trans students. This opinion is shared by a strong majority of moderate voters (64%), Hispanic voters (61%), and Black voters (72%).

Voters are also not eager to see trans students' rights to play sports taken away where states policies protect those rights. **Only 37% of voters would support a Supreme Court decision requiring states that currently protect trans students' rights to participate in sports to remove those protections.** A plurality of 39% of voters would oppose such a decision. **Similarly, a plurality of voters believes states that adopt trans-inclusive policies in school sports should be able to implement those policies without interference, with 44% of voters in support compared to 41% who are opposed.** This opinion is shared by a plurality of moderate voters (45% in support to 35% who oppose) and the majority of Hispanic voters (50%-41%) and Black voters (51%-23%).

While a majority of polled voters initially indicated support for policies that require all students to play on sports teams that match their sex assigned at birth, that support fell significantly when voters received more information about such policies and their impact. Initially, 66% of voters indicated support for policies that require all students to play on sports teams that match their sex assigned at birth, while 22% indicated support for policies that allowed students to play on teams that match the gender they identify with. More than one-third of voters (34%) reported neither strong support for nor strong opposition

to such policies, including 14% of voters who said they somewhat supported bans on trans participation in school sports, 9% of voters who said they somewhat opposed such bans, and 11% of voters who were not sure how they feel.

However, voters reconsidered their support for sports bans when informed about the different methods for verifying a student's sex and the harassment faced by students as a result of this scrutiny. **After being told this information, including when voters were told that trans students are more likely to experience bullying and harassment at school in states that ban trans students from participating in school sports, support for bans was no longer a majority position;** 49% of voters continued to support such bans while 36% opposed them, a 17-point shift away from support for bans and a 14-point shift toward opposition to these bans. In particular:

- Moderate voters see a net shift of 43 percentage points away from support, from 70% in support of bans and 16% opposing (+54 percentage points in support) to 43% in support of bans and 32% opposing (+11 percentage points in support).
- Hispanic voters see a net shift of 35 percentage points away from support, from 73% in support of bans and 16% opposing (+57 percentage points in support) to 53% in support of bans and 21% opposing (+32 percentage points in support).
- Black voters see a net shift of 44 percentage points away from support, from 63% in support of bans and 18% opposing (+45 percentage points in support) to being roughly evenly divided, with 41% in support of bans and 40% opposing (+1 percentage points in support).
- This information also led most voters who initially somewhat supported sports bans to abandon their support, with 42% now opposing bans (27% somewhat oppose, 15% strongly oppose) and an additional 23% now not sure how they feel. Similarly, a majority (53%) of voters who initially were not sure of how they felt about sports bans shifted to opposing bans when given this information, including 32% who now register strong opposition.

Voters registered similar shifts in opinion after learning that, in states that ban trans students from participating in sports, cisgender girls — or girls who are not transgender — have been bullied or harassed when playing sports because people think they don't look feminine enough. After being given this information, a minority of 48% of voters supported trans sports bans, while 36% opposed these bans—a remarkable 18-point shift away from support for bans and 14-point shift toward opposition to these bans.

The majority of voters (58%) also disapprove of methods to verify student eligibility for sports participation that require some girls to submit to a physical examination, such as a genital inspection. This is particularly notable because Idaho's sports ban law, at issue in the *Hecox v. Little* case, allows schools to demand verification of a student's sex through a "physical examination relying ... [on] the student's reproductive anatomy." Such enforcement methods were strongly opposed both by voters who initially somewhat supported sports bans (59%) and those who were initially not sure how they felt (70%).

Moreover, despite the outsized attention to the issue by the Trump administration, **trans participation in sports is a low priority for voters.** Indeed, it is the lowest-ranking on a list of nineteen priority issues. Trans participation in sports is only considered a top issue by 7% of voters, compared to inflation (55%), healthcare policy (43%), jobs and the economy (43%), war and other international conflicts (36%), and immigration policy (35%). A plurality of voters (42%) believes that elected officials are paying too much attention to trans issues.

A plurality of voters (48%) opposes the Trump administration’s investigations of school districts with policies that support trans students, which require school districts to spend taxpayer dollars on legal fees that would otherwise go to their overall district budget. Federal agencies under Donald Trump, including the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Justice, have launched over 100 investigations into school districts, state departments of education, and statewide athletic associations for having trans-inclusive policies. Opposition to this focus on investigating school districts for trans inclusive policies and requiring that school districts spend taxpayer dollars on legal fees is shared by 61% of voters who initially somewhat supported sports bans and 56% of voters who initially were not sure how they felt about sports bans.

Finally, a plurality of voters (41%) believes that elected officials focused on restricting trans rights do not share their priorities. Many voters believed it was likely that elected officials who are focused on restricting the rights of trans people hold other positions opposed to gender justice and equality, including opposition to same-sex marriage (56%), opposition to abortion access (55%), support for detention and deportation of immigrants (62%), opposition to birth control access (43%), and opposition to IVF (32%).

NWLC partnered with YouGov to commission this survey via online panel. The survey reached 1,530 voters nationally. The survey was conducted May 18 to May 22, 2026. The data has been weighted to approximate a target sample of U.S. adults based on gender by age, educational attainment, race, presidential vote, party ID, and region. The margin of error (MOE) for the sample is +/-2.8% and larger for subgroups. For more details on sampling procedures and margin of error for this survey, visit <https://today.yougov.com/about/panel-methodology>.