

American Family Association Applauds Mississippi Senate for Protecting Female Athletes

A bill aimed at protecting female athletes competing in high school and college sports in Mississippi passed in the state Senate late last week by a vote of 34-9 just ahead of the deadline. The “Mississippi Fairness Act” (SB 2536) would require any public school, public institution of higher learning or an institution of higher learning that is a member of the NCAA, NAIA, MHSAA or NJCCA to designate its athletic or sports teams according to biological sex.

“The Mississippi Fairness Act is legislation that’s long overdue,” said Rob Chambers, vice president for AFA Action, a division of the American Family Association. Protecting a level playing field for girls’ sports in public high school and college is common sense legislation that AFA has worked to pass in the past. We are thankful the bill passed in the Mississippi Senate and thankful for Sens. Angela Hill, Rita Parks and John Polk, who worked to pass the bill. People of Mississippi need to understand this was not an easy task to get the bill passed in the Senate. There was much opposition to the bill, even opposition that was reported to be coming from top Senate leadership. In the end, good prevailed.”

Earlier this week, American Family Association President Tim Wildmon wrote a letter to the Mississippi Senate urging that they vote to pass the SB 2536, “Everyone can appreciate a game well played, but no one likes a game of cheaters. That’s why I am asking you today to vote for The Mississippi Fairness Act (SB 2536): a bill that will keep bullies and cheats from ruining women’s sports.”

In his letter, Wildmon pointed to a level playing field and how, at its best, sports are a venue for human excellence and an opportunity to celebrate the designed uniqueness God has given to mankind. At its worst, sports become about winning at all costs—even if that means cheating.

“The Mississippi Fairness Act is not only the right thing to do, it is supported by Mississippi voters,” urged Wildmon. “Seventy-nine percent of registered Mississippi voters, including 87% of Republicans, support this legislation, according to polling by Mason-Dixon.”

Much of the day on Thursday, Feb. 11, the chances of the bill being considered looked bleak, as there was some push back in having the bill brought before the Senate. However, earlier in the day, over in the Mississippi House, State Rep. Becky Currie was successful in getting an amendment added to the “Mississippi Intercollegiate Athletics Compensation Rights Act” that restricted biological male student-athletes from earning compensation for the use, image or likeness of the student-athlete as a female athlete or on an athletic team or sport designated for females. Hill, R-Miss., author of SB 2536, said Currie’s amendment in the House, and the support of her colleagues Rep. Stacey Wilkes and Rep. Jill Ford, “lit the fire” that helped get the Fairness Act passed in the Senate.

“Finally, The Mississippi Fairness Act doesn’t violate a single NCAA rule, and it won’t lead to a loss of federal money for any school,” stated Wildmon. “The NCAA’s policies are permissive on this issue, allowing males to compete on female teams, but not requiring it. In addition, an Obama-era ‘Dear Colleague Letter’ trying to force such unfair policies on the states was enjoined by a federal court in 2016.”

Wildmon explained that Mississippi voters, women and girls want The Fairness Act. “It is the right thing to do,” he concluded. “The Fairness Act will protect women, save Title IX and uphold the integrity of high school and college sports in

Mississippi. I strongly urge you to vote Yes on SB 2536 and send this important piece of legislation on to the House.”
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