

Gov. Ron DeSantis Passes 'Fairness in Women's Sports Act'

Governor Ron DeSantis signed the "Fairness in Women's Sports Act" Tuesday, which bans males from competing in women's sports at the high school and college levels. The legislation passed earlier this year in the House 79-37 and in the Senate 23-16. The measure will take effect July 1.

Under the bill, student athletes' eligibility for sports teams would be based on their biological sex as stated on their original birth certificates issued "at or near the time of the student's birth." The bill applies the requirements to interscholastic, intercollegiate, intramural or club athletic teams or sports that are sponsored by a public secondary school, high school, public college or university institution. The bill also provides civil remedies for those who suffer harm by violations of the section of law.

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Kelli Stargel sponsored SB 1028, an education bill which concerns charter schools. However, Rep. Kaylee Tuck added a last-minute amendment which establishes the "Fairness in Women's Sports Act." Stargel stated this bill recognizes the physiological differences between the sexes and gives girls and women an equal opportunity to excel in sports.

"It's not meant to be hurtful. It's not meant to be discriminating. It's not meant to attack any group. This is not about that. This is about sports and having competitive advantage and having the ability to compete," said Stargel.

Governor DeSantis said, "As a father of two daughters, I want my girls, and every girl in Florida, to compete on an even playing field for the opportunities available to young women

in sports. Women have fought for decades to have equal opportunities in athletics, and we have to prevent those opportunities from being eroded as is happening in other states. It's common sense. Many thanks to Sen. Stargel and Rep. Tuck for their thoughtful work on this bill to ensure fairness in women's sports."

Florida is among several states where lawmakers have recently enacted similar legislation to protect women's sports. West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice recently signed the "Save Girls Sports Act" into law. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey also signed legislation restricting biological male students from playing on female K-12 sports teams. Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte also signed similar legislation last month.

Liberty Counsel's founder and chairman Mat Staver said, "We commend Gov. Ron DeSantis for protecting girls' and women's opportunities to excel in sports. Female athletes train hard to compete and should not lose titles, records and scholarships that are rightfully theirs and even incur serious sports-related injuries by competing against males." {eo}

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