



## FAQ: Understanding the Executive Order on Sports

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We know that sports play a vital role in healthy development and fostering a sense of belonging. They provide young people with opportunities to build confidence, develop teamwork and leadership skills, and stay physically active, all of which contribute to overall well-being. Being part of a team creates a sense of connection and support, helping youth form meaningful relationships and learn the value of collaboration. Sports also teach important life skills like resilience and goal-setting, which extend beyond the field or court and into everyday life.

However, on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, President Trump signed another anti-trans executive order titled, [“Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports.”](#) This is another attempt by the Trump Administration to create chaos and uncertainty and erase the existence of trans people.

We want you to know that no attempt to erase trans people will ever succeed. We won’t let it happen and we are in this with you. Trans youth are perfect just as they are. Trans youth are loved, important, valued, and belong. **No executive order or legal document can change that truth.**

Importantly, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) is facing relentless turmoil and chaos, exacerbated by a barrage of hate and aggression from the Trump administration. His administration is not only actively working to dismantle critical protections and supports, he aims to eliminate the Department, which will destabilize school environments throughout the country, including Vermont. The proposed

elimination of the DOE is not just an attack on federal oversight—it is a direct assault on the very resources and safeguards that ensure all students have access to a safe, affirming, and equitable education.

In Vermont, every student has the legal right to an education free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Schools are required to maintain safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments where all students can thrive.

## 1. What does this Executive Order do?

This order directs federal agencies to withhold funding from educational institutions that allow transgender women, girls and non-binary athletes to compete in women's sports. It also pushes for policy changes at the national and international level to limit athletic participation based on sex assigned at birth.

The order aims to roll back protections under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, a federal law that states:

*"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."*

## 2. Is the Trump Administration's interpretation of Title IX accurate?

Title IX was designed to prevent sex-based discrimination in education, including sports. Courts and previous administrations have interpreted Title IX protections to include transgender and non-binary students. This executive order attempts to reverse that inclusive interpretation. When there is an illegal executive action, it can be challenged through the judiciary.

Specific to this executive order, two youth and their families filed a complaint in the federal district court of New Hampshire on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. The plaintiffs are represented by several legal groups including GLAD Law, the ACLU of New Hampshire, and the firm Goodwin Law. Outright will track progress of this lawsuit and others.

### 3. How does this impact Vermont transgender youth and athletes?

Vermont General Laws prohibit discrimination in educational programs, opportunities, and other matters based on gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, and perceived sexual orientation in Vermont public schools. You can read more under [9 V.S.A. § 4501](#) and [9 V.S.A. § 4502](#).

These protections are also enshrined in the Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices, [Series 200–Vermont Educational Quality Standards \(16 V.S.A. §§164 and 165\)](#). These rules are essential because they set the foundation for ensuring all Vermont students receive a high-quality education. It states:

*“No student in a public school or independent school shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity as the result of, or based upon, the student's race, gender, color, creed, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability, or any other reason set forth in state or federal non-discrimination requirements.”*

Additionally, the [Vermont Principals' Association Athletic Policies](#) firmly prohibits discrimination in its policy on gender identity, which states the following:

*“The Vermont Principals’ Association (VPA) recognizes the value of participation in interscholastic sports for all student-athletes. The VPA is committed to providing all students with the opportunity to participate in VPA activities in a manner consistent with their gender identity as outlined in the Vermont Agency of Education Best Practices For Schools For Transgender And Gender Nonconforming Students. Vermont’s Public Accommodations Act (9 V.S.A. 4502) and VPA policies prohibit discrimination and/or harassment of students on school property or at school functions by students or employees. The prohibition against discrimination includes discrimination based on a student’s actual or perceived sex and gender. Gender includes a person’s actual or perceived sex as well as gender identity and expression.”*

Together, these define schools as places of public accommodation, forbid discrimination, and provide necessary protections for transgender athletes.

However, if the state complies with this order without considering existing Vermont law, this order could lead to transgender and non-binary students being banned from participating in school sports that align with their gender identity, removing them from teams and opportunities that provide community, leadership, and scholarships. It also threatens funding for schools that uphold inclusion.

#### 4. How are Vermont leaders and decision makers responding?

The Vermont Human Rights Commission, issued a statement on Friday, February 14, 2025 that states, among other things, the following:

*"The Vermont Human Rights Commission issues this statement to affirm that all students, including transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming students, are entitled to an educational environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. It is firmly established in Vermont law that treating students differently because of their gender identity is illegal."*

In a [WCAX news report on Wednesday, February 12, 2025](#), the AOE released a statement saying:

*"The agency will continue to protect all students and their ability to access the full educational experience, including sports participation." The report also states that Vermont Attorney General Charity Clark says she will fight to protect trans athletes' ability to participate, saying, "I want to reassure them that I have their back and I will put the full force of my office to protect them and take action if necessary."*

#### 5. Does this order affect more than just school sports?

Yes. It directs federal agencies to influence international sports policies, restrict visas for transgender athletes, and encourage state attorneys general to enforce bans on transgender athletes' participation. It could also lead to increased scrutiny and policing of all athletes' bodies.

## 6. What does this mean for schools and colleges?

Schools may face pressure to adopt policies that exclude transgender athletes or risk losing federal funding. They may also be required to enforce stricter sex-based classifications for locker rooms and sports participation.

Let's be clear: **this is not about fairness—it's about erasing trans people from public life.** Sports should be a place for all young people to thrive, and this order does the opposite.