

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 18, 2024

Ms. Gloria Nevarez
Commissioner
Mountain West Conference
10807 New Allegiance Drive Suite 250
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Ms. Nevarez,

We write with serious concerns about the safety and fair competition standards for female athletes participating in the Mountain West Conference. We urge you to update your student-athlete guidelines to prohibit biological males from competing against biological female students in women's sports.

Title IX was established over 50 years ago to even the playing field for women. Since its implementation, women have participated in safer and fairer competition—but recent events have shown this is at risk.

Recently, members of your conference have forfeited games, risking their competitive standings to ensure the safety of their female athletes. The Mountain West Conference's failure to prohibit biological males from competing in women's sports is unfair to the women and girls who have worked tirelessly to compete at the collegiate level. We applaud the bravery of these female athletes and the universities in our home states for taking a stand to preserve Title IX when the Mountain West Conference would not.

Title IX recognizes the fundamental biological differences between men and women and allows each to pursue educational programs and activities equally, including athletics. Failure to recognize these biological differences between males and females puts our daughters and granddaughters in harm's way. The Mountain West Conference is failing to create an environment that allows women to compete without fearing for their safety. As representatives of our states and as parents and grandparents, we demand you take action to reverse this unacceptable trend.

In April, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) voted unanimously to allow only students "whose biological sex is female to compete in women's sports."¹ NAIA President and CEO Jim Carr said that "it is crucial that NAIA member institutions, conferences, and student-athletes participate in an environment that is equitable and respectful."² The NAIA decision is a significant step toward protecting the rights and opportunities of female athletes.

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2024/04/08/naia-transgender-athlete-policy/>

² <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/4581383-small-college-association-bans-transgender-athletes-from-womens-sports/>

Earlier this year, nearly two dozen Senators sent a letter to NCAA President Baker urging the NCAA to adopt this guidance for the safety of women and the longevity of Title IX.³

The 2024-2025 Mountain West Conference handbook states, “gender equity is the fair distribution of overall athletics opportunities, supported by equitable benefits and resources available to all men’s and women’s teams.”⁴ Permitting biological men to play in women’s sports is not equitable; it is an injustice. Under these guidelines, it is only fair that biological males play men’s sports and biological females play women’s sports. Clearly, the Mountain West Conference has dropped the ball.

Life isn’t fair, but sports should be. We urge you to address these inequities in women’s sports in the Mountain West Conference immediately, and we look forward to working with you to support women in collegiate sports.

Sincerely,



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Burgess Owens
United States Representative



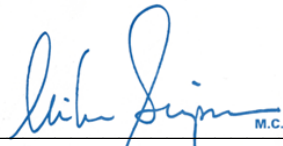
Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Russ Fulcher
United States Representative



John Barrasso
United States Senator



Mike Simpson
United States Representative



Cynthia Lummis
United States Senator



John Curtis
United States Representative

³ <https://www.blackburn.senate.gov/services/files/BCDEF68C-B38F-43FD-B3FF-4A46EB3F60B1>

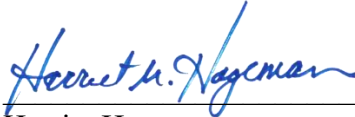
⁴ <https://storage.googleapis.com/themw-com/2024/09/b7c86c16-composite-9-27-24.pdf>


Mike Lee
United States Senator


Celeste Maloy
United States Representative


Mitt Romney
United States Senator


Blake Moore
United States Representative


Harriet Hageman
United States Representative