

Testimony
Before the United States Senate
Committee on the Judiciary

in Opposition to the Equality Act

By
Chelsea Mitchell
Canton, Connecticut

March 17, 2021

My name is Chelsea Mitchell, and I ran track at Canton High School in Connecticut.

I lost four state championships because our state policy ignores the biological reality and physical advantages of males over females in sport.

The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference's policy inflicted unfair competition on me and my fellow female athletes. I was forced to compete against biological male students every year of my high school sports experience. It was demoralizing. I rarely got to compete in fair races and lost awards and opportunities for recognition at a time when it was most crucial for college recruitment.

Competing in sports instilled me with confidence and hope that I can succeed in every aspect of my career, schooling, and social life. However, that confidence was stolen from me every time I lined up to compete against biological males. Even though I was one of the fastest girls in Connecticut, I knew that I didn't have a fair chance to win if biological males were in the female category. I felt defeated before the race even began.

Four times I was the fastest female across the finish line, but I didn't get the gold medal or the state title – the males in my race took that honor. Losing a state championship is hard, but losing one because the race isn't fair is gut-wrenching.

I have watched this happen over and over again on the track in Connecticut – so many girls have been impacted – missing out on their chance to advance in competition or take home a gold medal.

It isn't fair and it isn't right. We need separate sports categories based on biological sex in order to fairly compete. This is what Title IX was intended to protect and preserve. If biological males are permitted to compete in female sports, there will no longer be female sports as we know it.

Please protect the future of young female athletes so they don't have to go through what we in Connecticut have been through. We are watching and counting on you to stand up for women and girls like me. Please vote no on the Equality Act.



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By
Christina Mitchell
Canton, Connecticut

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My name is Christina Mitchell and I am the mother of three female athletes from Connecticut. Soccer, basketball, and track have been a huge part of our lives from the time the girls were just little. My husband dedicated years to coaching their youth basketball and soccer teams, always racing home from work to make it to practice. My oldest daughter is now a senior in college and a Division III track and field athlete. My youngest daughter is a freshman in high school and a varsity soccer and track athlete. They are talented athletes who work hard and love to compete.

My middle daughter, though, has proven herself to be an exceptional athlete. Chelsea was among the best sprinters in New England during her high school years. Those years, however, have been marked with controversy, stress, and heartbreak. In 2019, despite being the first female finisher in the 55m, 100m, and 200m at the Connecticut state championships, Chelsea was deprived of the gold medals and state titles she had earned in those races. That recognition went to a biological male instead.

It was April of 2017 when I first learned that our state's high school athletic association was allowing males to compete in girls' sports based on "gender identity" rather than biological sex. It was obvious that this would undermine girls' sports and would wipe away the opportunities that Title IX had created. When I contacted Connecticut state officials, I was astounded to hear a new narrative from them - "girls have the right to participate, not to win."

The results of the Connecticut policy have been devastating for female athletes. I have stood alongside the track and watched as two males were awarded girls' state championship titles 15 different times. One of the biological males went on to win seven New England championship titles too. This athlete had competed on the men's team for the three prior seasons and did not even rank in the top 100 among male sprinters in our state. The sudden switch to the girls' team in 2018 brought this biological male a stack of gold medals, championship titles, and the distinction as "2018-19 All-Courant girls indoor track and field athlete of the year."

The female athletes that were denied those titles worked hard to be the very best at their sport – yet they were deprived of fair competition, the thrill of victory, and the honor of being a champion. They missed out on media interviews and recognition of their accomplishments that they rightfully deserve. And they couldn't inform college coaches that they had just won a championship title. These things matter to a young girl, as do the scholarships and career opportunities that can flow from that success. I can promise you this: losing the state championship to a biological male four times – that mattered to my daughter.

She's not alone – hundreds of girls in Connecticut have lost championships, awards or their chance to compete because biological sex categories in sport were abandoned. Sadly, most of the female sprint records in Connecticut—some which stood for more than 30 years— have been wiped away by a male athlete. I've watched this play out in Connecticut for the last four years and it has been incredibly disrespectful to these young female athletes.

I urge you to learn from the terrible experience that the female athletes have undergone here in Connecticut. The science is very clear on this. We need sex-based categorization in sport due to the scientifically proven physiological differences between males and females. This is not a close

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call or the subject of honest debate in the scientific community. Many of you were athletes yourselves and I have no doubt that you understand this very well. Without sex-based categories, females will be eliminated from any meaningful participation and will be subjected to an increased risk of injury in contact sports.

When I listened to the hearing for H.R. 5 back in 2019, I was astounded to hear an expert testify that what was going on in Connecticut was not a big deal. That is untrue. It was a very big deal to many young athletes like Chelsea. While we were intimidated and silenced for many years, we are speaking out and sharing our story so that this doesn't have to happen to anyone else. I hope you will listen to the facts, follow the science, and stand up for the rights and welfare of female athletes.

Please vote NO on the Equality Act.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C" and "M".

Christina Mitchell

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By
Alanna Smith
Danbury, Connecticut

March 17, 2021

My name is Alanna Smith. I am a junior at Danbury High School.

I train hard every day to compete and be my physical and mental best at the starting block. Being an athlete is in my genes. My dad, Lee Smith, is an MLB Hall of Fame pitcher. My mom, Cheryl, was a high school track athlete and still runs today.

Running with my mom when I was younger taught me how to prepare, train, and focus. With her encouragement, I focused on short-distance running: the 100-meter, the 200-meter and the 400-meter. I became a three-peat 100-meter Connecticut state champion, winning it in sixth, seventh and eighth grade. In high school, I have set records and achieved some personal goals while other goals are hopefully still to be fairly realized. It is hard work, but every hour spent training can shorten my time around the track and put me ahead of my competitors.

When I was a freshman in high school everything changed. I knew I'd be racing against a male who identified as a female at the State Open. I knew I had no chance of winning despite the hours of training and knowing my personal bests in each event. I was defeated before stepping onto the track. I knew it wasn't fair to me or to any of the other girls competing at the State Open. I knew I had biologically-advantaged competition running against me.

It has taken me years to develop the personal confidence and sense of belonging I now feel on my track and field team. I believe everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. At the same time, the addition of males to girls' sports fills me with a sense of defeat before I even get set up in the blocks. What about dignity and respect for girls like me?

I love training and competing. The thrill of competing against girls like myself who train hard is rewarding. I compete to be the best, to be the fastest, to be a champion on a level playing field.

But, it's hard to ignore the physical differences between us and biological males when they are lined up with us in the starting blocks. Mentally we know the outcome before the race even starts. We train so hard to compete, and yet the biological males that compete against us rob us of titles, podium spots and opportunities to advance because they have inherent physical advantages over us. That biological unfairness doesn't go away because of what someone believes about gender identity.

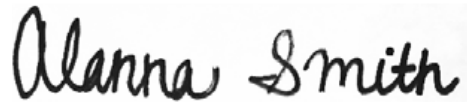
All girls deserve the chance to compete on a level playing field, but we should not be sidelined in our own sports.

Males will always have a physical advantage over females. Isn't that why we have women's sports in the first place? No matter how much testosterone levels are suppressed, boys remain stronger with more efficient physical bodies to excel in sports. Common sense and science both tell me that biology and NOT identity is what matters in athletics.

Biological females deserve the opportunity to be confident, to be competing against girls who are biologically the same as us, to have fairness of play, and to know we have a chance to win in our own sport.

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That's why I'm asking you to stand up for girls, for women, for female sports and for athletes like me. Please vote NO on the Equality Act.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alanna Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Alanna Smith

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By
Selina Soule
Glastonbury, Connecticut

March 17, 2021

My name is Selina Soule. I have been competing in track and field since my mom introduced me to it when I was a little girl. Track means everything to me. I would wake up every day and go through high school, just waiting to get to the track, waiting to run, waiting to jump. I spent countless hours training to shave fractions of a second off my time so I could win—so I could be the best. However, my chances of being first – of being the best – were shattered.

The Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference began allowing boys who identify as girls to compete in girls' sports. As a result, during all four years of high school, I was forced to compete against two biological boys identifying as girls. In that time, these two biological males won 15 women's state championship titles in track and field, titles that were previously held by nine different girls. And in just three years these biological males set 17 new individual meet records—records which we girls had no hope of breaking.

I remember what it was like to line up for a race and get into my blocks, but already know the outcome long before the start of the race. Those two biological male athletes would dominate the field, and female athletes were left competing for third place and beyond. No matter how hard we trained and how far we pushed ourselves, they beat us time and time again. I have absolutely nothing personal against either of them, but this isn't about self-expression, this is about our right – a woman's right – to win.

Not only was it frustrating, heartbreaking, and demoralizing to know I could not win, it was even more concerning to see how it was affecting girls' track and field. If changes are not made soon, we are facing the complete eradication of women's sports.

Boys will always have a physical advantage over us girls, and that is why we have women's sports in the first place. Science and common sense shows us that boys are, on average, bigger, stronger, and faster than girls. It's simple biology. That is why it is fundamentally unfair to let boys who identify as girls come in and dominate any sport.

I have lost countless opportunities over the past few years. I lost opportunities to compete on world class tracks and opportunities to win titles. During my junior year, I was denied the chance to compete at the New England Regional Championship. I missed advancing to the next level of competition in the 55-meter dash by just two spots—two spots that were taken by biological males. Because they were permitted to participate in a girls' division, I was forced to become a spectator in my own sport.

Female athletes throughout Connecticut and New England also missed out on chances to compete in front of college coaches and compete for college scholarships. I worry how many college recruiters, who only have a limited number of scholarships and slots on college track teams to award, will skip over the names of other female athletes and only look at the name at the top of those results—a name that belongs to a biological male.

Female athletes deserve the same opportunity as boys to excel and chase our dreams. Allowing male athletes to compete in girls' sports shatters those dreams and strips away opportunities that so many of us have spent years working to obtain.

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I encourage you to vote NO on the so-called Equality Act because I don't want other girls to have to go through the same pain, frustration, and discouragement that I and many Connecticut girls experienced for the past several years. No one thinks it is fair, but everyone is afraid of retaliation from the media, school officials, and bullies online. I just want to make sure that young girls don't have to face the same pain that I felt throughout my four years of high school.

Please vote NO on the Equality Act to guarantee girls across the US have a level playing field. Women fought long and hard to earn equal athletic opportunities. You have the chance today to protect and save women's sports for female athletes like me.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Selina Soule". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Selina Soule