



Trump Administration Shows Support for Female High School Track Athletes Involved in Transgender Case

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Chelsea Mitchell finally beat her foes on the track—but now she’s ready to beat them where it counts: in court.

The runner, one of the three Connecticut girls suing to stop biological boys from competing in their races, got some good news on that front last week, when a letter from the Department of Education finally became public.

For the first time since their case began, the Department of Education is warning schools: Uphold Title IX or face the consequences.

For Mitchell, it was the best development since she finally defeated a boy in competition this past February.

“It feels like we’re finally headed in the right direction, and that we will be able to get justice for the countless girls along with myself that have faced discrimination for years,” she said. “It is liberating to know that my voice, my story, my loss, has been heard—that those championships I lost mean something.”

The Education Department, which is the second agency after the Justice Department to weigh in on the girls’ side, unleashed its Civil Rights Office on the Connecticut athletic conference at the beginning of the year but failed to reach any sort of agreement.

Now, months later, the time for negotiating is over. It will “either initiate administrative proceedings to suspend, terminate, or refuse to grant or continue and defer financial assistance” to the conference and those districts, The New York Times explains, or refer the cases to the U.S. Department of Justice.

“Connecticut law is clear,” the Education Department’s attorneys insist, “and students who identify as female are to be recognized as female for all purposes—including high school sports,” the athletic conference said in a statement.

“To do otherwise would not only be discriminatory but would deprive high school students of the meaningful opportunity to participate in educational activities, including inter-scholastic sports, based on sex-stereotyping and prejudice sought to be prevented by Title IX and Connecticut state law.”

For Selina Soule and Mitchell and girls across the country, the idea that girls would continue to face this injustice is what’s driven them to stand up in public (sometimes at great personal cost) and fight.

The idea, Concerned Women for America’s Doreen Denny says, that biological boys have competed for three seasons as females and won NCAA titles is absolutely astonishing. Imagine it, she told “Washington Watch’s” Sarah Perry:

On the shelf of a ... college is a trophy that was won by a biological male athlete in a female sport ... We don't believe it's justified. We think that it is a complete [and] clear violation of the purpose of Title IX, which was enacted over 40 years ago now so that women athletes, that females had equal educational opportunities and benefits in athletics and education. And that has always meant binary male and female distinction.

Believe it or not, 18 states and the District of Columbia have now caved to this idea of gender identity, flooding girls sports with boys who are stealing their matches, meets, scholarships, and opportunities.

If the Department of Education follows through with this threat and cuts federal funding to these schools, it might finally get these districts’ attention.

“These standards that are set through these governing bodies for sports really do trickle down,” Denny pointed out. “The pressure that you’re seeing now, ... even at the school level with these [and] with other ... athletics across the board [is intense], and so all of it needs to change.”

Alliance Defending Freedom’s Christiana Holcomb, who’s representing the girls, was thrilled by the development, suggesting that the Trump administration go even farther and issue actual guidance “to school districts and universities across the nation that makes it very clear what they said in this enforcement letter, which is that, look, it violates Title IX to allow males to compete in the girls category.”

As for her athletes, she says, they “feel validated now that the U.S. government agency charged with enforcing Title IX agrees with them and has underscored their argument. That’s really very meaningful to them.”

You know, Chelsea, specifically, mentioned that she feels like her losses have meant something. You know, she has lost four state championship titles and countless other New England awards. And just to be able to look back on her athletic career the entire four years, she’s

competed against biological male athletes. And to be able to look back at that and say, 'OK, my losses and the public stand that I have taken actually have meant something.'

For now, the girls will fight on—trying to level the playing field for the generations of athletes who will come after them. But in the here and now, they agree, having the president and government cheering them on certainly gives them the push they need to keep going.

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