



February 7, 2024

To President Marty Bitter, President-Elect John Becker, and all members of the CIF Federated Council:

The Independent Council on Women's Sports (ICONS) calls on you to protect and support your female athletes and their right to fair competition in high school sports.

[ICONS](#) is a network and advocacy group who believe the next generation of women and girls deserve the chance to be champions. Our network spans all levels of sport and includes hundreds of Olympians and professional athletes, high school and collegiate athletes, and parents, coaches and administrators. Our goal is to protect the female category for every woman and girl, at every level, in every sport.

Throughout its Constitution and Bylaws, the CIF takes great care to outline its commitment to providing equal programs, facilities and awards for boys and girls, yet its Gender Identity Participation Policy allows males to identify onto female teams. The contradiction could not be more clear. The CIF cannot provide opportunities to girls in sport while at the same time, enabling boys to compete against and displace girls.

ICONS therefore demands the following of this governing body:

- Repeal all policies and rules that allow male athletes to take roster spots on girls' teams and/or compete in girls' events;
- Enforce the right of female athletes to participate on single-sex teams, ensuring safety and fair competition as required by Title IX, which supersedes California state law; and
- Require your member schools to provide single-sex locker rooms for female athletes.

The CIF must ground its policies in science and the [realities of sport](#). Overwhelming [evidence](#) demonstrates that male-female performance differences exist; [study](#) after peer-reviewed [study](#) has shown clear performance advantages for males in sport. Further [studies](#) demonstrate that male advantage persists even after attempts to suppress testosterone. The CIF must not be permitted to disregard the scientific consensus supporting a protected female category in its attempt to placate [advocates](#) working towards the destruction of girls' sports. **The only way sport can be fair and equal for women and girls is with a protected female category that excludes competitors with male advantage.**

And yet, the CIF continues to propagate a policy that allows male athletes on girls' teams, even as international sports governing bodies and state legislatures increasingly reject these unjust and inequitable policies. Here are just a few examples of how the CIF's ill-informed decision making is harming female athletes in schools and across sports in California:

Tate Drageset, The Buckley High School - Volleyball

CIF Division 5 Girls Player of the Year 2022-23; verbally committed to a D1 full scholarship for women's volleyball at the University of Washington.

Lorelei Barrett, The Buckley High School – Track & Field, Cross Country, Soccer

Placed top 3 in the CIF Southern Section Division 4 girls' 1600 as a freshman and sophomore.

June Watterson, Davis Senior High School – Skiing

CIF/CNISSF California-Nevada High School girls' state champion.

Athena Ryan, Sonoma Academy – Track & Field, Cross Country

In 2023, placed 6th in the CIF North Coast Section girls' 3 miles, making him eligible to advance to State Championships; with only 3 exceptions, placed within the top 6 in each event in which he competed.

Henry Hanlon, San Francisco Waldorf – Volleyball, Basketball and Soccer

Girls' team captain; routinely scores over one-third of the girls' team's points. In volleyball last fall, led his team to a conference championship title.

Maddie Gottlieb, Mira Costa High School – Tennis

As a freshman at Chadwick School, awarded All Prep League First Team honors in 2022. In 2023, helped Mira Costa to a championship title at the Point Loma Tennis Invitational.

Aaron Lester, Half Moon Bay High School – Volleyball

Concussed a player on an opposing team, ending that girls' senior season and athletic career early.

In each of these instances, team standings and advancement opportunities for girls were impacted. The harm is irreparable and the total disregard for the rights of the female athletes is duly noted.

We hear of new examples every day, as attempts to silence women and girls are no longer working; there is overwhelming and growing support for them in every corner of the country and around the world. From [high school girls](#) in Connecticut track to an [entire college swim team](#) in Virginia to [professional women in cycling](#), the athletes have done their part. They have sacrificed to be the tip of the spear and they have said no to males in their sport. It is enough.

Recognizing the biological differences between the sexes and protecting female spaces from male intrusion are foundational for girls to succeed in sports and in life. Laws giving women and girls the opportunity to take part in and succeed in sport are essential to the advancement of women and depend on the law's basic ability to distinguish between males and females.

ICONS works with sports governing bodies and legislative authorities to help them protect women from discrimination and exclusion on the basis of their sex. We are willing and able to share our expertise with the CIF – if the CIF agrees to honor its commitment to providing equal opportunity for female athletes.

The time is now. The CIF has an opportunity to act before decades of progress for women and girls in sport are undone. We are ready to support you in your efforts and invite you to reach out with questions.

Respectfully,

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