

SUPREME COURT RULING ON PROTECTIONS FOR WOMEN'S SPORTS

The Supreme Court decided in favor of the states, ruling that legislation which determines eligibility for women's and girls' sports based on biological sex was consistent with Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause.

Did You Know...

- The [core](#) ruling: "Consistent with Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause, we hold that the States may maintain women's and girls' sports for biological females. They may determine eligibility for women's and girls' sports based on biological sex. The Constitution and Title IX do not require an overhaul of women's and girls' sports throughout America."
- According to University of Cincinnati law professor Ryan Thoreson, the Court's [willingness](#) to "treat restrictions based on biological sex as benign" is a "worrying sign" for trans rights in other sex-segregated contexts — bathrooms, locker rooms, driver's licenses, passports, and the military ban.
- The ruling may [complicate](#) the Trump administration's broader pressure campaign on schools, since courts may now allow states without bans to withstand federal coercion by pointing to the ruling's limited scope.



This ruling is focused primarily on women's and girls' sports, rather than ruling more broadly on the question of allowing transgender individuals in sex-segregated spaces. There are currently [27 states](#) which have legislation that allows for sports team participation to be based on biological sex, all of which are now able to enforce this legislation under the Supreme Court's ruling.

Supreme Court Ruling On Protections For Women's Sports

Executive Summary

In June 2026, the Supreme Court ruled on two consolidated cases dealing with state laws allowing schools to limit women and girls' sports teams to biological females. The Supreme Court decided in favor of the states, ruling that legislation which determines eligibility for women's and girls' sports based on biological sex was consistent with Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause.

This ruling is focused primarily on women's and girls' sports, rather than ruling more broadly on the question of allowing transgender individuals in sex-segregated spaces. While this ruling could be used to expand restrictions based on biological sex, it also complicates the current effort by the Trump Administration to encourage states to enforce sports participation based on biological sex, as the ruling does not mandate that such policies be implemented.

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What Was The Decision?

- In June 2026, the Supreme Court [decided](#) two consolidated cases, *West Virginia v. B.P.J.* and *Little v. Hecox*, which centered on if under Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, state law could allow schools to limit women's and girls' sports teams to biological females.
 - Both cases [involved](#) plaintiffs who sought to participate on women's sports teams and were barred from participation due to their identifying as transgender women, who are not allowed to participate on women's sports teams under West Virginia and Idaho laws, respectively.
- On June 30, 2026, the Supreme Court [issued](#) a 6-3 decision, with Justice Brett Kavanaugh writing the majority opinion joined by Roberts, Thomas, Gorsuch, and Barrett.
- The core [ruling](#): "Consistent with Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause, we hold that the States may maintain women's and girls' sports for biological females. They may determine eligibility for women's and girls' sports based on biological sex. The Constitution and Title IX do not require an overhaul of women's and girls' sports throughout America."
- The reasoning for this decision rests on three pillars:
 - [The text of Title IX's protections](#) — When Title IX was passed in 1972, "sex" meant biological sex. The law and its regulations expressly permit separate teams "for members of each sex" precisely because of inherent physical differences between men and women.
 - [The reasonableness standard](#) — Separate teams for biological males and females are "reasonable" given those physical differences and the safety and competitive fairness concerns they create. Kavanaugh noted that 27 states, the NCAA, the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee, and the IOC had all drawn the same line.

- [Equal Protection / Intermediate Scrutiny tests](#) — The laws classify based on sex, which triggers intermediate scrutiny. Both Idaho and West Virginia satisfied this test by demonstrating substantial interests in competitive fairness and athlete safety.
- In a [dissenting](#) opinion by Justice Sonya Sotomayor, the Justice agreed that while West Virginia's ban does not violate Title IX, she argued that there was an "unresolved factual dispute" over if athletes who never went through puberty due to medical intervention, meaning she saw that question meant that the state's ban did not pass constitutional muster

Impact Of This Ruling

- According to University of Cincinnati law professor Ryan Thoreson, the Court's [willingness](#) to "treat restrictions based on biological sex as benign" is a "worrying sign" for trans rights in other sex-segregated contexts — bathrooms, locker rooms, driver's licenses, passports, and the military ban.
 - Former federal prosecutor Neama Rahmani [agreed](#) with Thoreson's assessment, saying the same logic could extend to "any space segregated based on biological sex."
- The ruling may [complicate](#) the Trump administration's broader pressure campaign on schools, since courts may now allow states without bans to withstand federal coercion by pointing to the ruling's limited scope.

States And Their Impact

There are [currently](#) 27 states with laws similar to the language of the laws that this Supreme Court case confirmed as legal. States which have these laws include but are not limited to Florida, Georgia, Texas, Ohio, Arizona, and Utah.

- States with similar laws previously [blocked](#) by courts will see any injunctions lifted as these laws are enforceable under this ruling.
- States with similar laws already in effect are now fully [validated](#) with no further legal challenge on Title IX or equal protection grounds being viable.
- States without legislation [preventing](#) men from participating in women's sports are not required to change their policies due to this ruling, as this ruling merely upholds that such laws are legal.

There are several states with ongoing conflict with the federal government on this issue, including:

- In March 2026, the Department of Justice [sued](#) the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota State High School League for allowing transgender athletes to compete in girls' sports and access female locker rooms. The DOJ sought declaratory and injunctive relief plus damages under Title IX. This litigation is ongoing.
- In July 2025, California formally [rejected](#) a Trump administration demand from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to ban transgender girls in sports and adopt biology-based definitions of male/female. While no lawsuits have been filed, conflict is expected to continue.

- In June 2026, the Department of Education [issued](#) a Notice of Impending Action against Jefferson County Public Schools In Colorado after a federal investigation found 61 "male students" on girls' sports teams in Jeffco. Jeffco's Board of Education authorized attorneys to go to court, calling it a "values issue." The state of Colorado itself has not capitulated.