

The *Selina Soule* and *Alanna Smith* Complaint

Case Type: Title IX Discrimination Complaint

Case Status: On Aug. 7, 2019 the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights agreed to investigate a complaint Alliance Defending Freedom filed on behalf of Selina Soule, Alanna Smith, and one anonymous Connecticut female high school athlete.

Significance: Whether the unfair playing field created by allowing male athletes to compete against girls based on gender beliefs violates Title IX.



Background: Selina Soule and Alanna Smith are high school students in Connecticut. Like many prep athletes their age, Selina and Alanna have devoted countless days, nights, and weekends to training, striving to shave mere fractions of a second off their race times. They do so hoping for the personal satisfaction of victory, an opportunity to participate in state and regional meets, and a chance to earn a college scholarship. Yet, despite their best efforts, Selina and Alanna have gone into races over the past two years knowing that they have little chance of winning. Neither do their fellow female competitors, including one anonymous co-complainant. That’s because, since 2017, the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) has allowed boys to compete without limitation in girls’ athletic competitions if they claim a female gender identity. As a result, two male athletes presenting as female have dominated the field, winning 15 women’s track championship titles since 2017—titles held by nine different Connecticut girls in 2016. In all, two boys have taken away from girls over 50 chances to advance to next-level races, and now hold 13 individual meet records in Connecticut previously held by 12 different girls. Not only does CIAC’s policy—and the endorsement of it by Selina’s school, Glastonbury High School—create an unfair playing field for female athletes; the policy reverses nearly 50 years of advances for women.

Key Points

- Girls deserve the same opportunity as boys to excel and chase their dreams. Allowing boys to compete in girls’ sports shatters dreams and steals opportunities.
- Boys will always have physical advantages over girls—that’s the reason we have women’s sports.
- A boy’s belief about his gender doesn’t cancel out his physical advantage over girls.
- Boys are robbing girls who deserve to win—crushing their dreams of competing at the next level.

Key Facts

- In Connecticut, two boys have won 15 women’s track championship titles since 2017—titles held by nine different girls in 2016. These competitions have consequences beyond the race itself, and influence scholarship opportunities and college careers.
- Science and common sense tell us that males are stronger than females. That difference shows up in size, strength, bone density, and even the heart and lungs. No amount of hormone therapy can eliminate all those advantages.
- These girls aren’t losing just the opportunity to win, but to earn college scholarships and launch their own careers in athletics, coaching, and more.

The Bottom Line: Girls deserve to compete on a level playing field. Forcing female athletes to compete against biological males isn’t fair and destroys their athletic opportunities.