

# How NCAA Changes to Transgender Policy Following President Trump's Executive Order Impact Schools

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## Takeaways

- President Trump signed executive order “Keeping Men out of Women’s Sports,” barring transgender women from competing in women’s sports and citing fairness, safety, and privacy concerns. Schools that do not comply with the new federal policy risk losing federal funding under Title IX enforcement.
- In response, the NCAA immediately revised its transgender participation policy, restricting competition in women’s sports to athletes assigned female at birth.
- Legal challenges are expected, as some states and advocacy groups argue the policy is discriminatory and violates previous Title IX interpretations.

## Background

On Feb. 5, 2025, President Donald Trump signed executive order “Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports,” which prohibits transgender women from participating in female athletic categories at federally funded educational institutions. The order also directed the State Department to demand changes within the International Olympic Committee. The Committee has left eligibility rules up to the global federations that govern different sports.

The Trump Administration has made a push to redefine sex-based legal protections under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, emphasizing biological sex as the deciding factor for athletic eligibility. Previously, on Jan. 20, 2025, the Administration issued an executive order declaring the federal government would recognize only two sexes, male and female, for all legal and regulatory purposes.

The NCAA has over 530,000 student-athletes, fewer than 10 of whom are transgender, according to a statement the NCAA’s president, Charlie Baker had provided to a Senate panel in December. In January, Baker called for greater legal clarity on the issue from regulators.

Finding that clarity in the form of the new executive order, in response, the NCAA Board of Governors voted to amend its transgender participation policy the day after Trump’s executive order was issued.

The new policy states that eligibility for NCAA women's sports is now strictly limited to athletes assigned female at birth. Transgender men (those assigned female at birth but who have begun a medical transition) may still participate in men's sports without restriction. However, an athlete taking testosterone for gender transition may only practice with a women's team and is prohibited from competing in official NCAA-sanctioned events. If a team allows an ineligible athlete to compete, the entire team will be disqualified from NCAA championships.

## Legal and Institutional Challenges

The executive order immediately ignited controversy as several states and legal groups vowed to challenge the order.

Pushback is expected, particularly in states like California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York, where laws expressly protect transgender rights. Schools in these states now face a dilemma: Whether to comply with federal regulations or uphold state laws that recognize gender identity protections for student-athletes. Schools in these states may risk severe financial consequences if they refuse to comply with the new federal mandate, potentially losing millions in federal education funding.

More than two dozen states already bar transgender athletes from participating in school sports, whether in K-12 schools or at the collegiate level. In January, the House passed a bill barring transgender women and girls from sports programs for female students nationwide (the bill is not likely to pass in the Senate).

## What Comes Next?

Some key questions remain:

- Will federal courts uphold or strike down the new Title IX interpretation?
- How will schools in certain states navigate the conflict between the executive order and new NCAA policy and state laws?

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National Law Review, Volume XV, Number 41

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/how-ncaa-changes-transgender-policy-following-president-trumps-executive-order>