



## **Riley Gaines Supports the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act**

April 17, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker of the United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Speaker McCarthy,

My name is Riley Gaines, and I am a Spokeswoman for Independent Women's Voice. I support the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act, H.R. 734, sponsored by Representative Greg Steube in the 118th Congress. Prior to joining IW, I was a student at the University of Kentucky where I was a member of UK's Women's Swim and Dive Team. I proudly finished my career as a 12x NCAA All-American, 5x SEC champion, SEC record holder in the 200 butterfly, making me the 10th fastest American of all time in the event, and 2x Olympic trial qualifier.

I experienced the need for this bill firsthand when on March 17, 2022, I was forced to compete against a biological male named Lia Thomas. Thomas was allowed to compete in the women's division after competing as a member of the University of Pennsylvania Men's Swim Team for three years. Thomas beat out the most impressive and accomplished female swimmers in the country, including Olympians and American record holders. (Previously, Thomas had been ranked in the 400ths – at best – in the men's division.) The next day, I raced Thomas in the 200-yard freestyle. We tied. Having only one trophy, the NCAA handed it to Thomas and told me I would

go home empty handed because Thomas needed to hold the trophy for photo purposes.

In addition to being forced to give up our awards, our titles, and our opportunities, the NCAA forced female swimmers to share a locker room with Thomas, a 6'4" 22-year-old male equipped with (and exposing) male genitalia. We were not asked for our consent. And we did not give our consent.

Unfortunately, my experience is not unique, and that is why I ask you to please pass H.R. 734. The number of female athletes who have been denied opportunities, traumatized, or hurt by policies that claim to promote "inclusion" is growing at an alarming rate. This is simply unacceptable, and the integrity of women's sports is eroding.

More than 50 years ago, Congress enacted Title IX to ensure equal opportunity in all aspects of education, including athletics. But without single-sex teams and single-sex competition, equal athletic opportunity is but a farce.

Forcing female athletes, like myself, to compete against biological males is unfair. But it's also discriminatory. Allowing biological males to take awards, roster spots, scholarships, or spots at a school from female athletes violates Title IX's prohibition of discrimination "on the basis of sex." This bill makes that explicitly clear and puts athletic organizations, athletic directors, and bureaucrats at the Department of Education on notice that they may not adopt policies that promote "inclusion" on the backs of women.

I know I am not alone in this fight. Tens of thousands of Americans have taken action in support of equal opportunity for female athletes by signing Independent Women's Forum's **Tell the NCAA: Stop Discriminating Against Female Athletes** or **Fair Play** Petitions, Independent Women's Voice's **Tell the NCAA** or **Fair Play**

Petitions, or through sharing their stories to our **Female Athletes Storytelling Drive**.  
Their voices are being heard, and it is time for leaders in Washington to listen.

I am thankful for Representative Steube's leadership on this important issue and urge all Representatives to work toward the bill's swift passage to preserve equal athletic opportunity for both sexes.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Riley Gaines". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Riley Gaines  
*Stand With Women Spokeswoman*  
*Independent Women's Voice*  
*Swimming*