
SENATE BILL 5097

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Warnick, Short, Boehnke, Dozier, Torres, and Wagoner

Prefiled 12/20/24. Read first time 01/13/25. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to safeguarding competitiveness in girls'
2 interscholastic athletic activities; amending RCW 28A.600.200; adding
3 a new section to chapter 28A.600 RCW; adding a new section to chapter
4 49.60 RCW; and creating a new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that girls' sports
7 are a key element of public education in Washington state. Competing
8 in sports gives girls opportunities for achieving excellence, teaches
9 the value of hard work and discipline, cultivates life skills of
10 teamwork that extend beyond the playing field, and creates lasting
11 relationships among competitors, coaches, parents, and the entire
12 interscholastic athletics community.

13 The legislature further finds that preserving fair competition in
14 girls' interscholastic athletic activities is essential for producing
15 the best educational experience for girls who choose to compete in
16 sports. Therefore, the state has an important interest in
17 safeguarding the competitiveness of girls' interscholastic athletic
18 activities.

19 The legislature has previously authorized the Washington
20 interscholastic activities association or other voluntary nonprofit
21 entity to supervise and regulate interscholastic sports. The

1 legislature now intends to clarify that the association's and
2 entity's role includes regulating participation in girls' athletic
3 activities for the purpose of promoting fair competition and safety.

4 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.600.200 and 2012 c 155 s 2 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 (1) Each school district board of directors is hereby granted and
7 shall exercise the authority to control, supervise, and regulate the
8 conduct of interschool athletic activities and other interschool
9 extracurricular activities of an athletic, cultural, social, or
10 recreational nature for students of the district.

11 (2) A board of directors may delegate control, supervision, and
12 regulation of any such activity to the Washington interscholastic
13 activities association or any other voluntary nonprofit entity and
14 compensate such entity for services provided, subject to the
15 following conditions:

16 ~~((1))~~ (a) The voluntary nonprofit entity shall not discriminate
17 in connection with employment or membership upon its governing board,
18 or otherwise in connection with any function it performs, on the
19 basis of race, creed, national origin, sex, or marital status;

20 ~~((2)(a))~~ (b) The school board of directors must consent to
21 abide by the competitiveness rules for interscholastic athletic
22 activities adopted by the association or other voluntary nonprofit
23 pursuant to section 3 of this act; and

24 (c)(i) Any rules and policies adopted and applied by the
25 voluntary nonprofit entity that governs student participation in any
26 interschool activity shall be written; and

27 ~~((b))~~ (ii) Such rules and policies shall provide for notice of
28 the reasons and a fair opportunity to contest such reasons prior to a
29 final determination to reject a student's request to participate in
30 or to continue in an interschool activity.

31 (3)(a) The association or other voluntary nonprofit entity is
32 authorized to impose penalties for rules violations upon coaches,
33 school district administrators, school administrators, and students,
34 as appropriate, to punish the offending party or parties;

35 (b) No penalty may be imposed on a student or students unless the
36 student or students knowingly violated the rules or unless a student
37 gained a significant competitive advantage or materially
38 disadvantaged another student through a rule violation;

1 (c) Any penalty that is imposed for rules violations must be
2 proportional to the offense;

3 (d) Any decision resulting in a penalty shall be considered a
4 decision of the school district conducting the activity in which the
5 student seeks to participate or was participating and may be appealed
6 pursuant to RCW 28A.600.205 and 28A.645.010 through 28A.645.030.

7 (4) The school districts, Washington interscholastic activities
8 association districts, and leagues that participate in the
9 interschool extracurricular activities shall not impose more severe
10 penalties for rule violations than can be imposed by the rules of the
11 association or the voluntary nonprofit entity.

12 (5) As used in this section and RCW 28A.600.205, "knowingly"
13 means having actual knowledge of or acting with deliberate ignorance
14 or reckless disregard for the prohibition involved.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.600
16 RCW to read as follows:

17 (1) The Washington interscholastic activities association or
18 other voluntary nonprofit entity delegated responsibility over
19 interscholastic athletic activities under RCW 28A.600.200 shall adopt
20 competitiveness rules designed to create and foster opportunities for
21 fair competition in girls' athletics.

22 (2) The competitiveness rules adopted under this section must:

23 (a) Be substantially related to accomplishing the following
24 objective: Ensuring ample opportunities for all student athletes to
25 participate in appropriately competitive events and contests that
26 align with the skill level of the competitors regardless of gender
27 identity; and

28 (b) Appropriately consider the effects of physiological and
29 hormonal variation among athletes as it relates to the
30 competitiveness and safety of events and contests, which may include
31 rules that permit the exclusion of individual competitors from girls'
32 athletics events and contests where the competitor would have an
33 unfair advantage based on endocrine characteristics.

34 (3) Rules adopted under this section may not authorize a sex
35 verification or dispute process, but may require age-appropriate
36 sampling for relevant hormone levels to determine whether an
37 individual will have an unfair competitive advantage or pose a safety
38 risk in a girls' event or contest.

1 (4) The directive to adopt competitiveness rules under this
2 section does not require, and may not be construed to require, the
3 abolition of distinct boys' and girls' teams, events, or contests in
4 interscholastic athletics. Interscholastic athletic teams, events,
5 and contests are encouraged to be organized into distinct activities
6 for boys and girls.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 49.60
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 Decisions regarding a student athlete made pursuant to the
10 competitiveness rules adopted under section 3 of this act do not
11 constitute unlawful discrimination and are not subject to this
12 chapter.

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