

Utah bill discriminates against transgender girls, LGBTQ advocates say

BY CRISTINA FLORES

KUTV

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD 2021

<https://kjzz.com/news/utah-bill-discriminates-against-transgender-girls-lgbtq-advocates-say>

SALT LAKE CITY (KUTV) — House Bill 302, sponsored by freshman lawmaker Kera Birkeland (R-Morgan) seeks to keep male athletes from playing in sports designated for women.

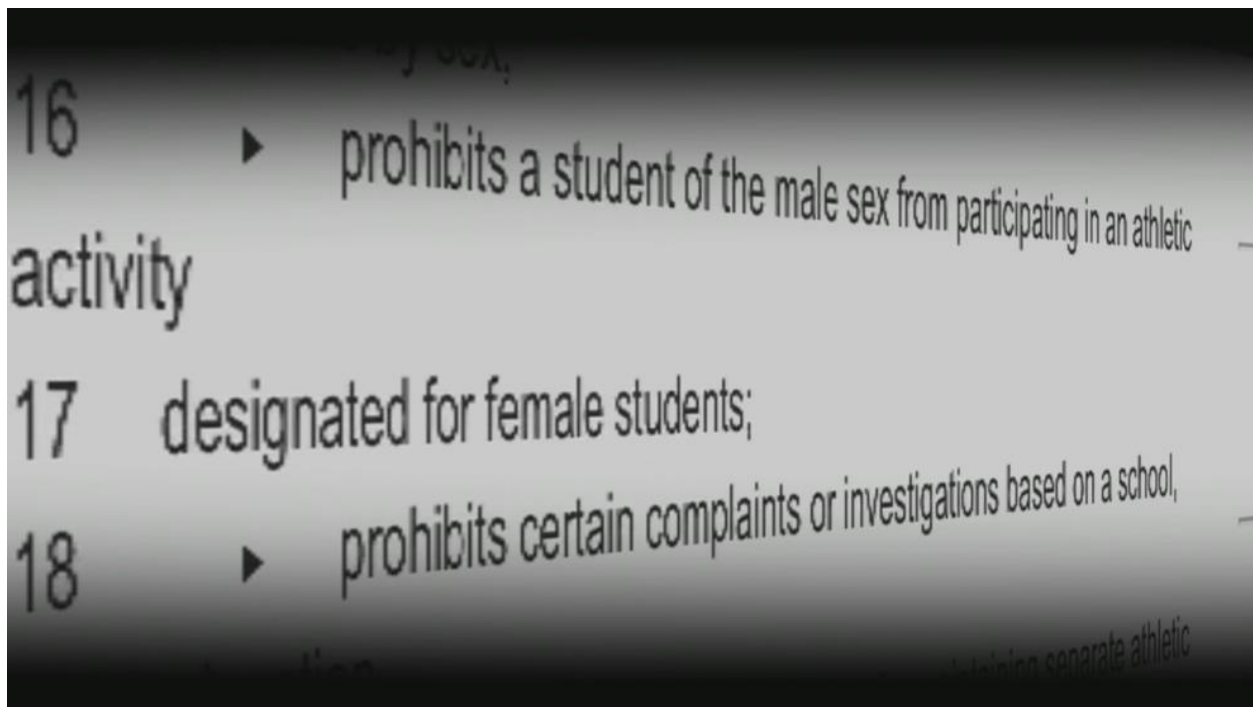
KUTV

The bill defines sex as “the biological, physical condition of being male or female determined by an individual’s genetics and anatomy at birth,” and tries to protect public schools and colleges from complaints.

Advocates for transgender people say the bill is meant to target and discriminate against transgender girls.

“It’s a clear violation of NCAA policies and, if passed, will likely bring Utah universities into conflict,” said Troy Williams, executive director of Equality Utah, an organization that advocates for LGBTQ+ people in Utah.

Williams said the bill was crafted without consulting transgender people.



House Bill 302 also says defines sex as “the biological, physical condition of being male or female determined by an individual’s genetics and anatomy at birth,” and tries to protect public schools and colleges from complaints. (KUTV)

Ermiya Fanaeian, a trans advocate, said lawmakers have no business in these issues. They should be discussions with athletic organizations and the students involved.

She said these types of efforts have been seen in other parts of the world and have surfaced in the U.S.

This is an example of very conservative lawmakers trying to challenge trans causes, Fanaeian said.

The number of trans athletes in the United States is so low, it’s kind of ridiculous how this was made into a bill,” she said.

In Montana, lawmakers are considering two similar bills. The ACLU of Utah is tracking the legislation in both states.

In August, a federal judge blocked an Idaho bill that would have barred girls' or women's sports teams from allowing transgender athletes who identify as female to compete.

READ: Sen. Lee supports bill to ban transgender women from participating in women's sports

Birkeland cited a busy meeting schedule at the Capitol and declined to comment for this story. Birkeland is from Morgan, Utah. According to her state legislature bio, she is a private preschool teacher and a sports referee.

For the latest news from the 2021 legislative session, click here.

ACLU of Utah @acluutah

This bill #HB302 mirrors similar anti-transgender legislation that is moving through the statehouse in Montana and other states... #utleg #utpol @EqualityUtah @utahpridecenter @TEAofUtah
Read it here: le.utah.gov/~2021/bills/st...

ACTION ALERT

A new bill was introduced:
H.B. 302 Preserving Sports for Female Students

This bill would prohibit transgender female students from participating in high school or college sports in Utah. It also blocks educational associations from investigating or sanctioning schools for blocking their participation and allows students to sue schools for violating the provisions of the bill.

Rep. Kera Birkeland (R-Morgan)

The ACLU of Utah opposes this bill.

5:00 PM · Feb 3, 2021

5 6 Copy link to Tweet