



PRESS RELEASE

AFPI SUES OREGON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION FOR SILENCING FEMALE ATHLETES' FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

July 23, 2024

Washington D.C.—Today, the America First Policy Institute (AFPI) filed a federal lawsuit against the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) on behalf of two Oregon student-athletes who were punished for silently protesting biological males competing in girls' sports.

Alexa Anderson and Reese Eckard earned medals in the women's high jump at the 2025 Oregon State Track and Field Championships. But when they quietly refused to step onto the podium rather than share it with a biological male competitor, OSAA officials swiftly removed them from the awards ceremony, excluded them from official photos, and withheld their medals.

AFPI's lawsuit, filed in the United States District Court for the District of Oregon, argues that OSAA's actions amount to unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination and retaliation, violating the First Amendment.

"These young women earned their place on the podium—and the right to express themselves," said Jessica Hart Steinmann, executive general counsel at AFPI. "Instead of respecting their viewpoint that girls' sports should be for girls *only*, Oregon officials sidelined them. The First Amendment protects the right to dissent—school officials don't get to reprimand students who refuse to agree with their beliefs."

The complaint alleges that OSAA maintains a longstanding pattern of supporting certain social and political protests—such as those promoting Pride or Black Lives Matter—while punishing dissenting views like those of Alexa and Reese. At the same championship, OSAA allegedly gave special treatment to transgender-identifying male athletes, allowing them to skip inspection protocols and competition rules that female athletes were required to follow.

AFPI is already representing a separate group of Oregon plaintiffs in an ongoing Title IX lawsuit challenging Oregon for allowing males to compete in female athletic categories. But without the ability to speak freely, those rights cannot be defended. That's why today's First Amendment lawsuit is essential—it focuses on protecting Alexa and Reese's right to peacefully express their belief that girls' sports should be for girls, without fear of government punishment.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights also confirmed on July 22 that it has opened an investigation based on AFPI's earlier complaint involving sex-based discrimination in Oregon athletics.

"This case is about every student's right to speak—or stay silent—on matters of conscience without fear of government retaliation," said Steinmann. "AFPI will continue fighting for fairness and free speech wherever they're under attack."

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About America First Policy Institute

The America First Policy Institute advances policies that put the American people first. AFPI's guiding principles are liberty, free enterprise, national greatness, American military superiority, foreign policy in the American interest and the primacy of American workers, families and communities. Several AFPI national leaders have been selected by President Trump to serve in his cabinet or other important roles, including AFPI Chair Linda McMahon, Secretary of Education; AFPI CEO Brooke Rollins, Secretary of Agriculture; Pam Bondi, Attorney General; Doug Collins, Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Scott Turner, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Lee Zeldin, Administrator of the EPA; Lt. General Keith Kellogg (Ret.), Special Envoy to Ukraine and Russia, Kash Patel, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, among others.

