



An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth

March 21, 2023

Dear Senator Port and authors of SF 206,

Thank you for making the push to make high school sports equitable for all Minnesota high schoolers. The Minnesota Youth Council greatly values your commitment to providing equal access to athletic activities in Minnesota, as more and more students lose their ability to participate in the sports that they are passionate about.

Inclusive sporting policies mean a lot to making transgender students feel welcome in schools, while also showing that transgender youth at schools with such policies have greater school safety, high grades, and lower reported suicide rates. There is no evidence that supports the claim that transgender athletes have any kind of competitive advantage over cisgender athletes. Athletic organizations, such as the NCAA and the International Olympic Committee, have allowed transgender athletes to participate on teams since 2004. Sports are an integral part of our schools since they can create a sense of community and support for students. This value is only heightened for transgender students who are often excluded from spaces that promote belonging.

The inclusion of gender-neutral bathrooms and privacy stalls is also much needed, as they provide a safe, private facility for transgender, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming people, who may face harassment for going into bathrooms that they may not identify with. Transgender teens that cannot access bathrooms that align with their gender identity face greatly increased risks of sexual assault and harassment. A national study in 2019 by GLSEN found that 45% of LGBTQ+ students avoided using gender-segregated school bathrooms and 44% avoided locker rooms because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Providing gender-neutral bathrooms gives these students and others a private and much safer environment than typical bathrooms. Thank you for working to improve the lives of youth in schools all over Minnesota. We appreciate your time and hope that more is to come with furthering gender inclusivity at schools.

Sincerely,
The Minnesota Youth Council

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