

America Is Being Consumed by a Moral Panic Over Trans People

Sept. 1, 2022



Brendan McDermid/Reuters

In Utah last year, the parents of two girls who'd placed second and third

during a state-level sporting event [got suspicious](#) about the girl who'd handily won first place: Had she *always* been a girl?

At the time, Utah had not yet passed a law barring transgender athletes from participating in school sports under their gender identity. Still, officials received complaints from parents about athletes who didn't "look feminine enough," David Spatafore, the legislative representative of the Utah High School Activities Association, recently testified. Officials were only too happy to investigate; in the case of the student who won first place, school administrators tracked down her academic records without informing her or her parents. "The school went back to kindergarten," Spatafore testified. "And she'd always been a female."

Phew! Lawmakers elsewhere, though, aren't taking any chances. In June, the Ohio House [passed](#) a bill requiring a doctor to examine schoolchildren's hormone levels, genetics or "internal and external reproductive anatomy" in the event of a dispute over the gender of an athlete participating in women's sports. There is currently [only one](#) known transgender athlete at the varsity level in all of Ohio high school sports, and she told a reporter recently, "I barely even get to play because I'm not great." Still, lawmakers called their bill the Save Women's Sports Act.

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