



U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

May 28, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC & FIRST-CLASS MAIL

Dr. Ronald W. Nocetti - Executive Director
CALIFORNIA INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION
4658 Duckhorn Drive
Sacramento, California 95834

Re: Claims of Sex-based Discrimination.

Dear Mr. Nocetti:

On February 12, 2025, the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (US ED) announced an investigation against the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) to determine whether CIF has violated its obligations under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), 20 U.S.C. § 1681 *et seq.*, by allowing male students to compete against female students in athletics. This letter is to advise you that the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) will work in coordination with US ED in its investigation, for it is also the responsibility of the Attorney General of the United States to enforce the provisions of Title IX. The Attorney General has delegated the authority to investigate compliance with these provisions to the Assistant Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division. *See* 28 C.F.R. § 0.50(a).

Title IX and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106, prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity operated by a recipient of Federal financial assistance. Pursuant to its statutory authority, as set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 1682, when the Attorney General has reasonable cause to believe that an educational entity that receives federal funding is engaged in a pattern or practice of discrimination in violation of Title IX, it is the Attorney General's responsibility to take appropriate action to eliminate that discrimination, including seeking injunctive relief. CIF and its member schools remain subject to Title IX and its implementing regulations.

You may be aware that DOJ and US ED's Title IX Special Investigations Team recently opened an investigation into whether the California Department of Education (CA ED) denied female students equal athletic benefits and opportunities to compete in athletics by requiring them to compete against male students who claim to be girls. This investigation is ongoing.

My office has found reasonable cause to believe that CIF, too, is engaging in a pattern or practice of discrimination against female athletes. CIF maintains a policy, CIF Bylaw 300.D, that permits, directs, instructs, or requires California high schools to allow males to participate in girls' interscholastic athletics, thereby depriving girls and young women of equal athletic opportunities.

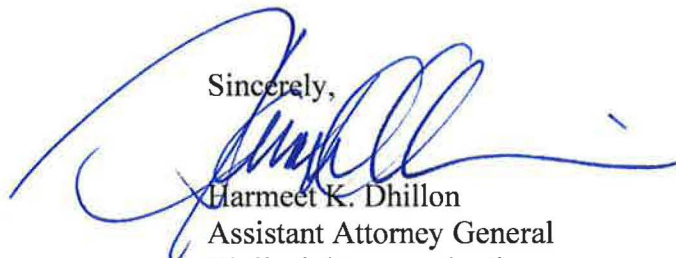
As a result of CIF's policy, California's top-ranked girls' triple jumper, and second-ranked girls' long jumper, is a boy.¹ As recently as May 17, this male athlete was allowed to take winning titles that rightfully belong to female athletes in both events.² The male athlete will now be allowed to compete against those female athletes again for a state title in long, triple, and high jump.³ Other high school female athletes have alleged that they were likewise robbed of podium positions and spots on their teams after they were forced to compete against males.⁴ Even California Governor Gavin Newsom has acknowledged that this practice is "deeply unfair" to girls and young women.⁵

In light of this alarming news and the other two ongoing investigations, I have directed my office to join US ED's investigation into CIF. Additionally, I have directed my office and the office of the United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California to review this matter to determine whether the actions of CIF, CA ED, the Jurupa Unified School District, and any applicable state laws, violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

It is important to note that the Department of Justice has not reached any conclusions about the subject matter of the investigation. We intend to consider all relevant information, and we welcome your continued assistance in helping identify what that might be. We expect and appreciate your continued cooperation in our investigation.

Upon receipt of this correspondence, please contact Deputy Assistant Attorney General Gregory W. Brown at (202) 514-7818 to discuss the parameters of this investigation, including the scope of the information that we will be seeking from you.

Sincerely,



Harmeet K. Dhillon
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Investigation

¹ *Trump Calls Out AB Hernandez in Truth Social Post, Threatens Funding Over Transgender Athlete Participation*, NBC Palm Springs (May 27, 2025), available at <https://www.nbcpalmsprings.com/2025/05/27/trump-calls-out-ab-hernandez-in-truth-social-post-threatens-funding-over-transgender-athlete-participation>

² Tarek Fattal, *Transgender Athlete Wins CIF Track and Field Titles in Girls High School Events*, Sports Illustrated (May 19, 2025), available at <https://www.si.com/high-school/california/transgender-athlete-wins-cif-track-and-field-titles-in-girls-high-school-events-01jvmqrckp7b>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ See generally Compl., *Save Girls Sports et al. v. Tony Thurmond, et al.*, Case No. 5:24-cv-02480 SSS (C.D. Cal. Filed Jan. 31, 2025).

⁵ Brook Migdon, *Newsom Calls Trans Athletes Playing in Women's Sports 'Deeply Unfair'*, The Hill (Mar. 6, 2025), available at <https://thehill.com/homenews/lgbtq/5180521-newsom-trans-athletes-womens-sports/>.

cc: Bilal A. Essayli
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District of California

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