


Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brent Johnson, Assembly President
Members, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

FROM: Richard Derkevorkian, Assembly Member 

DATE: June 28, 2023

SUBJECT: Resolution 2023-049, Supporting Passage of Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development Resolution 02-2023 in Support of Preserving the Opportunity for Student Athletes While Balancing Competitive Fairness and Safety for All Who Compete (Derkevorkian)

This resolution is brought forward in support of the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development Resolution 02-2023 and the subsequent Board proposals that are intended to preserve a fair playing field for all competitors while allowing for open opportunities for competitors. Primarily this is brought forward for the following core reasons:

1. Biological Differences: Boys and girls experience distinct physiological variances during puberty, resulting in dissimilarities in strength, speed, and overall athletic performance. These inherent differences provide a rationale for maintaining separate sporting categories, ensuring fair competition based on physiological equality.
2. Level Playing Field: Middle and high school girls' sports were established to create equal opportunities for female athletes and promote fair competition. The inclusion of competitors who were boys at birth can create an imbalance in the playing field, which undermines the purpose and safety of separate women's competitions. This discrepancy may deter female athletes from pursuing sports due to decreased chances of success.
3. Safety Concerns: Physical contact and collisions are inherent in many sports. Given the biological differences between boys and girls, allowing boys to compete in women's sports may increase the risk of injury for female athletes. The safety and well-being of athletes must be a top priority, and ensuring that sports remain gender-separated can help maintain a safer environment.
4. Scholarship and Career Opportunities: Many female athletes rely on scholarships and professional careers in sports to further their education and pursue their athletic dreams. The inclusion of boys in women's sports could potentially reduce the number of opportunities available to female athletes, as boys may dominate competitions and garner scholarships or professional contracts that were originally intended for women.
5. Title IX Compliance: Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 was implemented to promote gender equity in educational programs, including sports. Allowing boys to

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participate in women's sports may raise concerns about Title IX compliance, as it could diminish the number of opportunities available to female athletes, undermining the spirit of the legislation.

Some may say that this identifies a solution that is not a problem in Alaska. However, I believe it is better to be proactive than reactive. The State School Board should be applauded for getting out in front of this issue in a manner that is fair and provides opportunity – through separate sports divisions – for all competitors.

Your consideration is appreciated.