



Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries
2433 Rayburn House
Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Jeffries:

Thank you for your ongoing leadership in combating the rise of discrimination against LGBTQ+ Americans. We appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts on H.R. 734, the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act.

[GLSEN](#) is the leading national organization on LGBTQ+ issues in K-12 education, working at the local, state, and national level to transform education systems to improve conditions for LGBTQ+ students across the United States.

GLSEN believes that every student has the right to a safe, supportive, and LGBTQ-inclusive K-12 education, and works to ensure that LGBTQ+ students are able to learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment.

H.R. 734, the Protection of Women and Girls in Sports Act, is designed specifically to attack students in the LGBTQ+ community, and opens the door for bullying and harassment. This legislation prohibits transgender students from participating in sports that align with their gender identity, robbing them of their right to participate in sports.

Participation in sports has positive effects on youth development, such as improving physical health, social skills, and psychological well-being. Additionally, [research](#) has found that sports participation is related to greater feelings of school belonging and pro-school behaviors. To restrict which students can benefit from participation in sports is to contribute to a hostile school environment that further isolates and discriminates against transgender students.

Policies that create social exclusion have been found to have a negative impact on students' mental health. GLSEN's [2021 National School Climate Survey](#) found that among those who reported considering dropping out school, over half (51.5%) said it was due to hostile school climate created by anti-LGBTQ+ policies, such as restrictions on their ability to access sex-separated spaces. Further, students who experienced anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination were nearly three times as likely to have missed school in the past month as those who had not (43.3% vs. 16.4%). These students reported lower levels of self-esteem, higher levels of depression, and

were more than twice as likely to have seriously considered suicide in the past year as compared to students who did not experience these discriminatory policies.

H.R. 734 targets the [41% of transgender youth](#) who have participated on at least one school sport team in the past year. Removing students from their sports teams will reinforce feelings of self-doubt, isolation, and a feeling that they do not belong.

Rather than working to further entrench the mental health problems faced by students, Congress should be acting to support our children in schools. American families want to enjoy time watching their children participate in their favorite sports, not incite flames of hatred and exclusion.

GLSEN thanks you for your ongoing leadership and we are happy to serve as a resource if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Aaron Ridings

Chief of Staff and Deputy Executive Director for Public Policy and Research

GLSEN