



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF UTAH FOUNDATION, INC.
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March 22, 2022

Dear Gov. Spencer Cox:

Thank you for your veto of H.B. 11 (Student Eligibility in Interscholastic Activities).

The ACLU of Utah and many others felt blindsided by the complete revision of this bill just hours before the end of the 2022 Legislative Session—and after months of what we considered genuine negotiations to reach an agreeable solution.

Like you, we know that almost no one who joined us in these sensitive discussions supported a discriminatory ban against transgender youth in sports. The last-minute introduction of an outright ban not only overturned months of careful work, but also created a host of unknown legal and financial challenges for Utah school districts and sports organizations.

Discriminating against transgender athletes not only prevents them from experiencing the sense of confidence and inclusion associated with participating in sport, but it also compounds the exclusion and trauma far too many transgender Utahns already experience. Further, discriminatory exclusion does not align with constitutional guarantees of due process or equal protection. The ACLU of Utah is ready to litigate to protect the rights of transgender students in Utah.

Also like you, we remain most concerned about the impact H.B. 11 will have on transgender Utahns and those who love and support them. The last thing these young people need are more speeches, headlines, and bills proclaiming them to be threats instead of valued members of their communities.

Days after the session ended, we received a phone call from a Utah high school student who told us that they stayed up to watch the livestream of the final debate over H.B. 11. And they were not alone. This student told us that dozens of other transgender and queer students were texting back and forth as they watched Utah lawmakers describe them as dangerous threats to other students, their schools, and the future of sports.

Thank you for keeping your promise to the youth of Utah to veto H.B. 11.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brittney Nystrom".

Brittney Nystrom
Executive Director
ACLU of Utah

Cc: Lt. Governor Deidre Henderson, Michael Mower, Kathy Bounous, Jennifer Napier-Pearce, Neil Abercrombie