ARVADA
United Methodist Church

AUMC'S JUSTICE IN ACTION COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS A "NO" VOTE ON PROP 134

Approved by committee vote on August 18, 2026

PROPOSITION 134 – Prohibiting Students from Playing on Sports Teams That Are Not Aligned with Their Sex Assigned at Birth

WHAT THIS INITIATIVE WOULD DO

This measure would amend Colorado statutes to require sports offered by schools or athletic associations to be designated as belonging in one of three categories: (1) male (men or boys); (2) female (women or girls); or (3) coeducational or mixed. Students would be prohibited from participating on sports teams that are not aligned with their sex assigned at birth. The measure defines "male" is defined as a person whose reproductive system is organized around the production of sperm; "female" is defined as a person whose reproductive system is organized around the production of ova. The measure applies to sports offered by athletic associations, public, charter, private, or denominational elementary or secondary schools, and accredited public and private postsecondary educational institutions in the state of Colorado.

Text of the measure

ARGUMENTS FOR THE INITIATIVE

Physical differences between males and females justify having separate athletic teams based on the biological sex of the athlete. Testosterone, the sex hormone essential to male development, confers advantages to males in areas such as strength and speed. Putting males on separate teams from females reduces the chance of injury to female athletes. This measure would also encourage girls and women to participate in sports, as cisgender females may be less likely to participate on teams that allow transgender females. Finally, separation by sex allows female athletes to compete on a fair playing field for athletic accomplishments, including educational scholarships.

Supporters: Protect Kids Colorado

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE INITIATIVE

The proposed initiative prevents transgender students from participating in activities shown to increase physical wellness and mental and emotional health, without evidence that would justify this exclusion. Physical differences between the sexes do not arise until puberty. Even after puberty, the wide variety of other factors influencing athletic performance, and the wide variety of competitive sports, means that it is unfair to trans female students to claim that they will always have advantages over cis female students, particularly if they have been taking gender-

affirming hormones designed to lessen the impact of testosterone. This law is also unnecessarily vague and broad, leaving unanswered important questions of implementation that will have direct impact on student athletes across the board in terms of stigmatization and confidentiality.

Opponents: Families Not Politics, One Colorado

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

2026 Colorado Election Blue Book – Proposition 134 (mailed to voters)

Ballotpedia

JUSTICE IN ACTION COMMITTEE POSITION ON THIS INITIATIVE

As a committee and pursuant to a consensus vote, **we oppose this initiative and urge United Methodists to vote against it.**

OUR REASONS FOR THIS POSITION

This initiative pits the rights of two traditionally marginalized groups against each other: transgender females and cisgender females. We are commanded by our faith to view each person as being worthy of dignity and respect and created in the image of God; we are also directed by our Social Principles to support and advocate for the rights of all kinds of gender minorities. For this reason, it is important for us to carefully review the extent and nature of the asserted problem, and whether the proposed initiative weighs the competing rights appropriately and represents the best possible outcome for all involved.

The number of trans students is very small, and the number of trans students who want to play competitive sports is even smaller. We do not see evidence of a sweeping problem that needs a blanket ban to address immediate safety issues. In addition, the existence of safety and fairness issues will not come up with every trans athlete or in every sport or at every level or at every age. Preventing all trans students from competing in all sports at all levels is thus unfair to them without corresponding benefit to cis females.

On the other hand, there may be circumstances in which the abilities of a trans athlete are so far outside the range of normal cis athletes' abilities that some form of exclusion may be warranted for purposes of safety and equity. But determinations like these are likely to be the exception rather than the rule, and our policies should be structured accordingly.

For these reasons, we believe that trans students should be permitted to play on teams consistent with their gender identity, and any assertion with respect to safety or equity in an individual case should be addressed on an individual basis. This approach has been taken by entities overseeing sports in Australia and Canada, and for us represents an appropriate way to balance the important rights of all of the groups and persons involved. Because Initiative 109 takes an approach that is harmful to trans students without sufficient reason, we believe it is contrary to our faith.

WHAT WE CONSIDERED IN TAKING THIS POSITION

UMC sources considered:

- Relevant provisions of the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church (attached)

- Trimble, J. "Protecting Transgender Human and Civil Rights," UMC General Board of Church and Society, 3/23/26
- Committee discussions

External sources considered:

- History and text of the measures available from the Colorado Secretary of State
- Ballotpedia resources and analysis
- Australian Sports Commission (2019). Trans and Gender Diverse Guidelines.
- Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (2016). "Creating Inclusive Environments for Trans Participants in Canadian Sport."
- Media reports:
  - Toomer, L. "'Families Not Politics' launches campaign against anti-trans Colorado ballot measures." Colorado Newsline, 3/27/26.
  - CNN (May 2025). "Do transgender women have an athletic advantage? Here's what the science does – and doesn't – say."
  - Wikipedia (retrieved August 2026). "Transgender People in Sports."

UMC SOCIAL PRINCIPLES 2025-28 – EXCERPTS RELEVANT TO PROPOSITION 134

Para. 163 **IV. THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY**

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BASIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

We declare that all individuals, no matter their circumstances or social standing, are entitled to basic human rights and freedoms. These rights are grounded in God's gracious act in creation (Genesis 1:27), and they are revealed fully in Jesus' incarnation of divine love. As a church, we will work to protect these rights and freedoms within the church and to reform the structures of society to ensure that every human being can thrive.

...

We condemn all attempts to deny individuals their basic rights or freedoms or to strip human beings of their inherent dignity and worth. We, therefore, reject within the church and wider society any act of discrimination, hatred or violence directed against individuals or groups based on national origin, tribal affiliation, ethnicity, age, gender identity, disability status, economic condition, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or any other factors...

...

I. *Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities* – Because all people are of sacred worth and certain basic human rights are due to everyone, we are committed to supporting the equal rights, liberties, and protections of all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity ... Moreover, because in many countries sexual and gender minorities are disproportionately impacted by social stigmas, discrimination, coercion and violence, we call on churches, governments, businesses, and civic organizations to do all in their power to combat such unjust treatment and to promote equal rights and protections for all.

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