

May 8, 2025

Mr. Ron Nocetti, CIF Executive Director  
Mr. Mike West, CIF-SS Commissioner of Athletics  
California Interscholastic Federation  
4658 Duckhorn Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95834

Dear Mr. Nocetti and Mr. West:

SUBJECT: CIF GENDER IDENTITY POLICY

In February, the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) stated that it would not comply with the federal government's recent executive orders related to protecting women's sports. Instead, CIF indicated that it will enforce its existing policy to permit male students to compete against female students in events designated for females if those male students "identify" as females ("CIF's Gender Identity Policy"). We write to express our disappointment in CIF's failure to respect and protect our female athletes and our strong opposition to CIF's Gender Identity Policy. Said plainly, CIF is failing female student athletes, undoing decades of hard-fought battles to ensure equity in athletics and no sex discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX"). CIF's Gender Identity Policy also creates an environment hostile to member religious institutions.

For many years before it adopted the Gender Identity Policy, CIF separated numerous sports by sex. This policy reflected an objective, self-evident reality. Men and women are different; their bodies are built differently. Distinct male and female characteristics and capabilities reflect biological truths. Maleness and femaleness, therefore, are not fungible or inconsequential attributes "assigned" at birth by delivering physicians or parents. Instead, biological sex goes to the core of a person's physical reality.

In light of that reality, common sense dictates that men and women should compete in athletics separately to ensure fairness and safety and to provide advancement opportunities for women. Women's need for a dedicated space in athletics where they may excel *as women* is so obvious that it is enshrined in federal law. Congress passed Title IX to require an equal opportunity for women to participate in education and education programs and activities, including athletics, for recipients of federal financial assistance.

However, more than five decades after Title IX was enshrined in law, CIF now eschews common sense and rejects objective reality through its Gender Identity Policy. CIF's Gender Identity Policy is harmful because it is founded on a falsehood: that a student's gender is merely "assigned to him or her at birth," rather than an objective, biological characteristic present from the moment of conception.

As educational institutions, we have a moral and ethical duty to form students throughout their crucial developmental years. As religious institutions, that duty is accompanied by a heightened existential task: to help young people discover and embrace their identities as men or women intentionally created by a loving God.

Our faith views the objective reality of an individual's given maleness or femaleness as a divine gift, essential to the individual's identity. Each person is made in God's image and likeness as

either male or female, beloved sons or daughters of almighty God. From this status, each person is vested with an inherent dignity worthy of respect. Our sincerely held religious belief is that a person's sex is immutable from conception and is not a characteristic of one's own choosing. Our objections to CIF's Gender Identity Policy, therefore, are not rooted in malice against any students experiencing gender dysphoria. Instead, we protest this Policy that denies objective truth. This Policy is wholly lacking in sincere or authentic charity for those who suffer from gender dysphoria, resulting in harm to these students and injustice to those students of the opposite sex with no alternative but to compete against them.

For young women, CIF's Gender Identity Policy means lost opportunities and an unlevel playing field. The consequences of this Policy will be felt this weekend as CIF's state semi-final competitions for track and field events take place. Star female athletes, some of whom attend our schools, will soon compete in multiple track and field events against a male athlete who self-identifies as a female. If their respective regular-season performances are any indication, the male student will trounce his female competitors, depriving them of opportunities for advancement in tournaments, state championships, performance records, and potentially even college scholarships. Some of our female athletes have indicated they will not compete in their events to protest the injustice of this situation. This result makes it clear that the CIF Gender Identity Policy deprives women of the equal opportunities required by Title IX. Worse still, in some sports, the CIF Gender Identity Policy jeopardizes the physical safety of female student athletes.

CIF's Gender Identity Policy also fosters an environment that is increasingly hostile to religious member schools. CIF's expectation that all faith-based schools facilitate the CIF Gender Identity Policy puts religious schools in the untenable position of adhering to the tenets of their faith in their classrooms and communities but practicing something contrary to their faith on their athletic fields. Through the CIF Gender Identity Policy, CIF effectively expects some religious educational institutions to violate their own religious beliefs, identity, and mission, and to facilitate an unjust competitive regime that ignores biological differences between males and females. As religious schools, our primary duty is to honor God and to serve him by forming our students in truth and wisdom while protecting them from harm. CIF's Gender Identity Policy puts us to an unconstitutional choice between operating consistent with our religious beliefs and complying with a CIF mandate to participate in a California state program.

We understand that CIF's Gender Identity Policy as currently written comports with California state law. However, under the constitutional structure of our federal republic, state laws that conflict with binding federal laws are invalid. (See United States Constitution, Article VI.) Given the recent very clear direction from the Executive Branch of the federal government and its administrative agencies regarding the meaning of the word "sex" and its implementation in the application of Title IX, we strongly encourage CIF to amend its Gender Identity Policy in a manner that safeguards the interests of all female athletes.

We further encourage CIF to use its significant standing as a prominent state actor with a monopoly over competitive high school athletics in California to effect state legislative reforms. We encourage CIF to employ its influence, perhaps alongside the California Department of Education, to take a leading role in demonstrating the respect and protection due to female students by persuading the California General Assembly to establish a regime that limits eligibility for female sports team and athletic competitions to biological females, thus guaranteeing girls and women equal opportunity and fundamental fairness.

Please be advised that we intend to pursue all available remedies, legal and otherwise, to fulfill our duties to our students and school communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Mr. Richard Meyer  
President, JSerra Catholic High School, San Juan Capistrano

Dr. Mary Scott  
Executive Director, Orange Lutheran High School, Orange

Dr. Jeffrey Beavers  
Executive Director, Crean Lutheran High School, Irvine