

HOW TO SHOW THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY THAT AB 89 & 844 PUTS OUR COMMUNITY'S LIVES AT RISK

Assembly Bills 89 and 844 are anti-trans bills being heard in the California State Assembly's Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism on Tuesday, April 1st. SFVRD has written a position statement against these two bills. It can be viewed and downloaded [here](#). You can use that letter or draft your own (template text at the bottom) and share it in the following ways.

HOW TO CONTACT THE CA STATE ASSEMBLY'S COMMITTEE ON ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, AND TOURISM:

1) Assembly's online comment portal:

The most effective way is for the public to provide written testimony before the hearing by visiting <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/>. Please note that any written testimony submitted to the committee is considered public comment and may be read into the record or reprinted.

2) By Email

AART.DL@asm.ca.gov reaches all staff for the committee. Individual committee members are listed below.

****NOTE:** AART.DL@asm.ca.gov reaches all staff for the committee. If the email doesn't work, it's likely being flooded with messages. Wait a few minutes and try it again.

3) Phone Call

Phone number for the committee is **(916) 319-3450**. Contacts: Chief Consultant Brian Anderson & Committee Secretary Tabatha Vogelsang. Individual committee member numbers are also listed below.

4) Message Your State Reps

Use [this link](#) to send a message to your State Representatives, they may not be in this committee, but it doesn't hurt to let them know how unpopular these bills are. [Look up your representatives](#) for additional contact information.

Contacts:

The Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism is located in the Legislative Office Building, 1020 N Street, Room 152, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Committee Contacts:

Chair: Christopher M. Ward, (916) 319-2078

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Additional Contacts

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CA State Assembly Speaker: Anthony Rendon, (916) 319-2063

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State Capitol, 10th and L Streets, Room 219 Sacramento, CA 95814

Template

Title of Email: No on AB 89 & 844, Don't Endanger the Lives of Our Community

To The California State Assembly's Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism:

As a **PICK ONE: FAN/PLAYER/SUPPORTER/OFFICIAL/ETC** of Roller Derby, I, **INSERT YOUR NAME HERE**, am strongly opposed to Assembly Bills 89 and 844, the transgender sports ban and scientifically unsound definitions of sex. Every kid and adult deserves the right to play with their friends regardless of their identities. Additionally, the push to ban transgender women from sports is based in transphobia and misogyny, with little credible scientific evidence backing up the claim that transgender women have a competitive advantage. The attempts to legislate away the biological reality for many is an erasure of the experiences of intersex individuals.

Modern roller derby has risen to prominence primarily on the backs of female athletes over the past 25 years and has been inclusive of trans women the entire time. It is a physical contact sport that's enjoyed by skaters of all sizes and abilities. The tallest, fastest, strongest skaters in our league are not trans women. Our trans skaters fall on various spectrums of these traits and help contribute to the team as a whole.

Our policy is clear: trans women are women, and women are disadvantaged in sport not because of a lack of physical and mental capabilities, but the lack of opportunities and support. Women have historically been dissuaded from participating in sports, if not

outright banned. Historically, women are excluded from sports due to societal beliefs about their physical capabilities and the perceived threat to their femininity and reproductive health, with some sports associations even banning women from playing on their fields. While this explicit dogma is no longer followed, these attitudes persevere and create unwelcoming spaces for all women, including trans women. As we've seen in too many instances to recount, most notably in the USA Gymnastics scandal, sexual assault by cisgender men is the primary threat to women's safety in sports.

Barring trans women from women's sports is putting them in danger. For school age kids it's about playing with your friends, learning new skills, challenging yourself, working as a team, staying physically active, and learning life lessons through sports. These opportunities should not be denied to kids because they are trans. Lawmakers should be expanding access to sports, not creating unnecessary hurdles that push kids, young adults, and adults out of activities that keep them healthy and thriving, both physically and mentally.

Paired with the appropriate medical care, any perception of a physical advantage is erased. Perception is exactly what it is. Research published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* showed that transgender athletes could be at a physical disadvantage compared to their cisgender counterparts. Transgender women make up a small percentage of the population and an even smaller percentage of competitive athletes. These bills also erase the existence of trans men and intersex athletes. It would force men and boys to compete with women and girls, like Mack Beggs in Texas, a trans boy who wanted to wrestle with the other boys but was forced to wrestle with girls and vilified when he won titles. We see it with the forced medicalization of athletes like Caster Semenya, just to compete.

Let's be clear, even IF there were a physical advantage, that's exactly what sports is about. The higher level one reaches in sports, the more it becomes about pairing any advantages one might have with the skills needed for the sport. It's why basketball and volleyball players are tall, track athletes are fast, and gymnasts are extremely flexible. Pairing his unique physical advantages to swimming made Michael Phelps the greatest swimmer ever. The real advantages that create disparity on the field are money and access to resources, including training, proper nutrition, quality equipment, and worry-free time to commit to a hobby. "Biological sex" is not a binary either, it's bimodal with a lot of variation and overlap between the two modes.

This all comes down to a plan to inspect the genitals of kids and young adults. In a world where sexual assault and coercion are the true threats to youth sports, and women's sports specifically, giving adults in power more access to intimate contact with

kids is a terrible idea. The recent viral clip of a high school basketball coach tugging at a player's hair and berating her illustrates the real dangers female athletes are in.

Banning trans athletes will also impact cisgender athletes on a much larger scale. These bans then become an act of enforcing whatever version of femininity or masculinity the enforcement arm of a ban holds. We've seen gender non-conforming cis women attacked in women's bathrooms because someone declared them not woman enough. This will open the door to harass any girl or woman who does not present sufficiently feminine to a coach, teammate, or rival. Even at the chromosomal level, the International Olympic Committee stopped chromosome testing because cis athletes found out their chromosomes don't match their lived experience of sex and gender.

As the Sacramento LGBT Community Center pointed out, in his veto of a similar bill, Utah Governor Spencer Cox, a Republican, stated:

"They are great kids who face enormous struggles. Here are the numbers that have most impacted my decision: 75,000, 4, 1, 86 and 56.

- *75,000 high school kids participating in high school sports in Utah.*
- *4 transgender kids playing high school sports in Utah.*
- *1 transgender student playing girls sports.*
- *86% of trans youth report suicidality.*
- *56% of trans youth having attempted suicide.*

Four kids and only one of them playing girls sports. That's what all of this is about. Four kids who aren't dominating or winning trophies or taking scholarships. Four kids who are just trying to find some friends and feel like they are a part of something. Four kids trying to get through each day. Rarely has so much fear and anger been directed at so few. I don't understand what they are going through or why they feel the way they do. But I want them to live."

Transgender women make up a small percentage of the population and an even smaller percentage of competitive athletes. This is a non-existent problem that only serves as a distraction to the real issues facing our communities. Sports are a source of critical life skills and for many provide a lifeline to community support that offers mentorship, physical activity, and a sense of belonging. AB 89 and AB 844 would strip these opportunities away from the very people who need them the most, as well as making sports less safe for every other girl and woman by increasing the policing of their bodies.

We hope representatives in the State Legislature side with all kids being able to play with their friends and stand in opposition to these bills.

Sincerely, **INSERT YOUR NAME HERE**