

Selina Soule is fighting for justice for women in sports

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The transgender movement seemed like a pretty straightforward “rights” issue when it began. But after gathering steam, it became clear that trans rights and women’s rights were headed for a bruising collision. In one institutional or social arena after another—women’s prisons, rape shelters, locker rooms, waxing salons—we have seen that “justice” for transwomen and often does mean injustice for women.

Injustice for women is nowhere more starkly evident than in the realm of sports. Sports is perhaps the last real bastion of the meritocracy in western society. Or was, before the capitulation of the sporting world to trans dogmas that have sacrificed women’s rights on the altar of gender correctness. Biological males who identify—or say they identify—as women are redefining women’s sports and in the process draining motivation from female athletes who want to compete in sports that depend on power and speed as the basis for success.

Most women athletes are afraid to rock the boat. If even world-renowned Martina Navratilova can lose sponsorships and get kicked off boards and be forced to apologize for protesting male intrusion into women’s sports, why would a humble unknown dare to challenge the new rules?

One such Connecticut athlete did dare. Selina Soule failed to qualify in the 55-metre dash for the New England Regional Championships by two spots. Both spots went to biological males. Soule suddenly found herself a spectator instead of a contender. After watching the same biological males win (complete with male chest-bumping) 15 women’s state championships in Connecticut that had previously been won by 10 different female athletes, Soule felt called to action. Soule is challenging her state’s athletic conference transgender policy which, since 2017, along with 19 other states, has permitted athletes to compete on the basis of gender identity rather than sex. (By contrast, the International Olympic Committee and the National Collegiate Athletic Association require males competing in female sports to reduce testosterone levels.)

Backing her is Alliance Defending Freedom, who filed a civil-rights complaint with the Education Department on behalf of Soule and two other (unnamed) girls. Selina and her lawyer, Christian Holcomb, were interviewed on Tucker Carlson’s Fox News show. Holcomb explained that their argument would be that allowing male participation violates the girls’ Title IX prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex.

Title IX passed in 1972. The purpose of the bill was to encourage girls like Selina Soule to participate in sports with equal resources and opportunities as those offered to male athletes, who at the time were considerably advantaged. The words “gender identity” were not included in the bill. But during the Obama administration, the Education and Justice departments advised public schools to “treat a person’s gender identity as the student’s sex for purposes of Title IX and its implementing regulations.” Failure to do so carried the threat of withdrawal of federal funding. The Trump administration rescinded this edict, but hasn’t replaced it. The issue is in flux until Congress or the Supreme Court decides if Title IX refers to anatomy or subjective feeling.

According to an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal by Madeleine Kearns, a William F. Buckley Fellow at National Review, there may be even more serious problems ahead for women athletes if a Democrat wins the presidency in 2020. In May the House passed the Equality Act, which would amend the Civil Rights Act to redefine sex as gender identity. All the leading candidates have endorsed it. The bill would ensure that all 50 states mirror Connecticut’s gender policies. Kearns writes: “Carrying on the legacy of President Obama, Democrats seem to hope that no one will read the fine print or realize what the policies mean in practice.”

Soule is taking her public stand in order to ensure that this dramatic unlevelling of the athletic playing field does not slip in under voters’ radar. She is not happy about being in the limelight, but says, “I think it is more important to get this issue out there and to somehow find a solution, than for girls to end up being on the sidelines of their own sport.”

“You are a brave girl for standing up,” Carlson told Selina. And indeed she is. We must hope for the sake of all-female track athletes that her suit succeeds.