

SENT VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

May 21, 2025

Quilcene School Board
P.O. Box 40
Quilcene, WA 98376



Washington

PO Box 2728
Seattle, WA 98111
(206) 624-2184
aclu-wa.org

Martin Valadez
Board President

Michele Storms
Executive Director

La Rond Baker
Legal Director

John Midgley
Of Counsel

Adrien Leavitt
Brent Low
David Montes
Jonathan Nomamiukor
Staff Attorneys

Tracie Hooper Wells
Paralegal

Re: *Quilcene School Board Resolution Impacting Transgender Students*

Dear Quilcene School Board Members –

We write to express our grave concerns regarding the Quilcene School Board’s recent resolution that bans transgender students from participating in sports based on their gender identity. This resolution is inequitable, discriminatory, and untenable. Moreover, this resolution likely violates Washington’s anti-discrimination laws, as well as violative of the Office of Superintendent Public Instruction’s “Gender-Inclusive Schools” policy.

Discriminatory restrictions, like the Quilcene School Board’s resolution, are devastating for transgender students. Transgender students already face alarming rates of bullying, family rejection, depression, and suicidality. But when officials who are meant to protect these children implement policies designed to exclude them, the results are catastrophic. Instead of supporting these vulnerable students, the School Board’s resolution will only further degrade transgender students’ emotional and mental health, subject them to increased bullying, and shut them out of what should be a prosocial youth activity. These proposed amendments further the nationwide trend of exclusion and bullying of transgender youth, which include an alarming rise in exclusionary laws and policies that directly harm the wellbeing of transgender youth. In a 2024 peer-reviewed, published study, the Trevor Project found that anti-transgender laws cause up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts for transgender and nonbinary young people.¹

Sports help young people pursue positive relationships, strengthen character, and build confidence. This is especially true for girls’ and young women. High school girls who play sports earn higher grades and have higher levels of self-confidence, including regarding their body image. Despite these clear benefits, there are many barriers impacting girls’ and young women’s involvement in high school sports, including lack of funding, stigma, harassment, and under-recognition. Instead of addressing these important issues, the Quilcene School Board’s resolution politicize

¹ *Anti-Transgender Laws Cause up to 72% Increase in Suicide Attempts Among Transgender and Nonbinary Youth, Study Shows*, The Trevor Project, Sept. 26 2024, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/anti-transgender-laws-cause-up-to-72-increase-in-suicide-attempts-among-transgender-and-nonbinary-youth-study-shows> (citing Wilson Lee, et. al, *State-level anti-transgender laws increase past-year suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary young people in the USA*, *Nature Human Behavior*, Jun. 14 2024, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-024-01979-5.epdf>).

participation in girls' sports, creating incentives to target cisgender and transgender girls.

The School Board's resolution is also contrary to the positions of leading advocates for women's sports, including the Women's Sports Foundation, that support the participation of transgender girls in girls' sports. The Women's Sports Foundation supports inclusive policies—like WIAA's current, long-standing policy—that permits transgender girls' participation on teams that align with their gender identity.² The recognition of the importance of access to gender-inclusive sports is reflected in the Office of Superintendent Public Instruction's policy and procedures that dictate students sports participation must be “in a manner that is consistent with their gender identity.”³

The School Board's resolution does not support student participation in athletics. Rather, this new policy plays into the efforts to politicize student athletes, targeting a small, increasingly vulnerable group of young people for further discrimination, bullying, and harassment.

We ask that the School Board immediately rescind this harmful, likely unlawful policy.

We further request, pursuant to the Public Records Act RCW 42.56, all written communication and documents sent or received by Quilcene School Board members regarding this policy, by June 6, 2025.

Sincerely,
Adrien Leavitt, Staff Attorney
La Rond Baker, Legal Director
American Civil Liberties Union of Washington Foundation
aleavitt@aclu-wa.org
baker@aclu-wa.org

CC: Curtis Leonard

² WSF Statement on State Bills Banning Transgender Youth Sport Participation, Mar. 11 2021, https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/media_statement/wsf-statement-on-state-bills-banning-transgender-youth-sport-participation.

³ OSPI Policy 3211, 3211P.