

Riley Hughes
Chicago IL
LD 2239

As a social worker, it is at the utmost importance to me that we protect the rights of children, a marginalized population who do not have the same rights as adults and do not have a say in who represents them in government. For adults to decide how children (and particularly queer children) express themselves is not only dangerous, but has been linked to increased experiences of suicidal ideation. Children deserve a childhood free from adults making judgments about their body parts, and especially reproductive organs. This also is so dangerous for intersex people, who are already under and misrepresented.

Sports are far more than a physical competition. Sports are about connecting and learning what it means to belong and be part of a team. Most kids and people do not go to play sports at the highest level. Youth sports don't even have a reason to be separated by sex or gender. As a young girl competing, I was faster and stronger than all of the boys until puberty. As a cisgender girl, I was beating boys who were my age and older.

I strongly believe this is deeply rooted in misogyny and transphobia, which have no place in sports. Inclusion is not a threat to anyone, and particularly not in women's sports. Find a better way to deal with your discomfort. It's not any child's fault that they are born the way they are. Be better. The kids are alright. Listen to them.