



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

February 25, 2025

Attorney General Ellison and Executive Director Martens,

This Department of Justice will hold accountable states and state entities that violate federal law. Indeed, we have already begun to do so. Earlier this month, the Department of Justice sued two states—Illinois and New York—that defied federal immigration laws. We also stand ready to sue states and state entities that defy federal antidiscrimination laws.

President Trump recently directed the Department of Justice and the Department of Education to prioritize enforcement actions against athletic associations that deny girls an equal opportunity to participate in sports and athletic events by requiring them to compete against boys. Yet in response, state athletic associations—including Minnesota’s—have issued defiant statements saying that they would continue requiring girls to compete against boys in sports and athletic events. Attorney General Ellison has since issued a legal opinion asserting that the Minnesota State High School League would be violating state law unless it continues this demeaning, unfair, and dangerous practice. And he has shamefully described the federal government’s attempts to enforce federal antidiscrimination laws as “authoritarian bullying.”

Let me be clear. Requiring girls to compete against boys in sports and athletic events violates Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972. And under the Constitution, federal law—including Title IX—is “the supreme Law of the Land.” U.S. Const. Art. VI. It therefore does not matter if Minnesota state law allows, or even requires, state athletic associations or other similar entities to require girls to compete against boys in sports and athletic events. Where federal and state law conflict, states and state entities are required to follow federal law—not because we live in an authoritarian state, but because the Constitution requires states to follow the supreme law of the land.

Minnesota should be on notice. The Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights has begun a Title IX investigation into the Minnesota State High School League. If the Department of Education’s investigation shows that relevant Minnesota entities are indeed denying girls an equal opportunity to participate in sports and athletic events by requiring them to compete against boys, the Department of Justice stands ready to take all appropriate action to enforce federal law.

I hope that it does not come to this. The Department of Justice does not want to have to sue states or state entities, or to seek termination of their federal funds. We only want states and state entities to comply with the law. And federal law requires giving girls an equal opportunity to participate in sports and athletic events by ensuring that girls need to compete only with other girls, not with boys.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pam Bondi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pam Bondi
Attorney General