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Pennsylvania Democrats Delay Vote on Women's Sports Bill

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Democrats in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives used procedural maneuvers this week to delay Senate Bill 9, the Save Women's Sports Act, which supporters say is critical to ensuring fairness and safety for female athletes.

Senate Bill 9, known as the Save Women's Sports Act, would require public schools and State System of Higher Education institutions to designate sports as male, female, or coed, and prohibit biological males from competing in female-designated athletics. Proponents

argue this framework is necessary to uphold equal opportunities and safeguard competitive integrity for girls across the state.

The bill includes a provision that allows affected students to sue for injunctive relief if they lose athletic opportunities or suffer harm due to biological males participating in female sports categories. The bill passed the Pennsylvania Senate on May 6, 2025, by a vote of 32-18, including support from all 27 Republicans and five Democrats, while 18 Senate Democrats opposed it.

Despite bipartisan Senate passage, Democrats in the House, holding a 102-101 majority, moved this week to block the bill from reaching a floor vote. State Representative Peter Schweyer, democratic chair of the House Education Committee, led a motion to re-refer SB 9 to the House Health Committee, which, under chamber rules, delays its consideration by at least 15 legislative days. The reassignment vote passed 14-12 along party lines, with only Democrats supporting the motion to re-refer and Republicans opposed to it.

Republican lawmakers expressed frustration over what they see as a deliberate attempt to silence debate and prevent a public vote on a matter that resonates with many Pennsylvania families.

“We’re delaying justice for girls,” said Republican State Representative Joseph D’Orsie. “We’re prioritizing the delusions of some over the privacy, safety, and welfare of millions of girls in the Commonwealth,” said Republican State Representative Joseph D’Orsie.

State Representative Marc Anderson echoed those concerns, questioning why House leaders refused to allow open discussion. “Why can we not debate this openly, with an up—or—down vote, when 80% of the American public support sports being limited to the biological gender?” asked Republican State Representative Marc Anderson. Anderson asked during committee proceedings.

The bill’s future remains uncertain. If the bill eventually clears the House, it would go to the desk of Governor Josh Shapiro, who has not said whether he plans to sign or veto it.

Schweyer and Governor Shapiro did not respond to requests for comment at the time of publication. Meanwhile, Republicans have pledged to continue pressing for a vote, arguing that girls deserve clear rules and a level playing field in school athletics.

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