

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MEDIA ADVISORY

BREAKING: JUDGE DISMISSES *GAINES v. NCAA* — RILEY GAINES AND ICONS WILL APPEAL

ICONS Founders Urge Congress to Withdraw Support for NCAA's Protect College Sports Act

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA — On Monday, a federal judge ruled that the NCAA is not subject to Title IX. This ruling means the NCAA can force as many men onto women's teams and into women's locker rooms as they wish.

In the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, United States District Judge Tiffany R. Johnson issued a decision holding that the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is not accountable under Title IX for authorizing men to compete in women's college sports or access women's locker rooms.

Judge Johnson accepted the NCAA's argument that the NCAA is not subject to Title IX and dismissed the case *Gaines v. NCAA*, brought by women college athletes seeking to hold the NCAA responsible for granting men access to women's sports and private locker rooms. This decision removes all protections for women in NCAA collegiate competition across the country and underscores the vulnerability of women's sports until court victories are secured.

The [Independent Council on Women's Sports \(ICONS\)](#) has funded this lawsuit, supporting Riley Gaines and the other female athletes trying to hold the NCAA accountable and strike down policies that authorized male athletes to compete in women's college sports, including at the 2022 Women's NCAA National Swimming & Diving Championships, during which male student athlete William Lia Thomas competed and utilized the women's locker rooms at Georgia Tech University, winning an NCAA national championship and three All American awards intended for women.

The Plaintiffs now have thirty (30) days in which to file a notice of appeal, which would be the first step in appealing Judge Johnson's ruling to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

Riley Gaines, the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit against the NCAA, said:

"This momentary setback will not deter me or other women athletes in the least. **Rest assured, we will be appealing this decision.** We are on the side of truth. I am confident Americans will rally to our side to fight the NCAA. Working together we will defeat the NCAA's continuing efforts to trample women's rights in sports."

ICONS Co-Founder Kim Jones, a former NCAA All-American tennis player, said:

“We believe the district judge erred and that the Court of Appeals will find that the NCAA, which is the controlling body of college sports for more than 1,100 member schools, almost all of which are federally funded, is subject to Title IX. We will not give up our fight for women and girls’ rights in sports.

“ICONS will support an appeal by Riley Gaines, Brooke Slusser, Kylee Alons, Reka Gyorgy, Kaitlynn Wheeler, Grace Countie, Ainsley Erzen, Lily Mullens and the many other young women who depended on the NCAA to protect their equal opportunities but were let down by the NCAA. We urge all those interested in supporting these courageous women athletes to join our grassroots effort to protect women’s rights in sports against the NCAA. Please go to www.donatetoicons.com and learn how you can get involved in fighting the NCAA.”

ICONS Co-Founder Marshi Smith, a former NCAA champion swimmer, said:

“The NCAA thinks it can use its vast financial resources to avoid responsibility to protect women’s opportunities in college sports. We won’t let the NCAA get away with it. The NCAA’s refusal to recognize its responsibility to uphold women’s rights means the NCAA cannot be trusted to regulate anyone’s sports—men’s or women’s.

“All Americans who care about women’s sports should act immediately to prevent the NCAA from hurting women and girls. ICONS urges every member of Congress to withdraw support for the Protect College Sports Act which, if passed, would give the NCAA vast new powers over college sports eligibility and a broad exemption from federal law.

“ICONS calls upon every female athlete, every soccer mom, and every girl’s dad who cares about girl’s sports to immediately call your Senators and your Congressman and ask them to vote against the Protect College Sports Act. The NCAA cannot be trusted to receive broad new powers that it will only use to inflict further harm upon women.”

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ICONS is a non-partisan, non-profit network of female athletes and their supporters committed to ensuring fair and safe competition in women’s sports.

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