



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 10, 2023

Riley Gaines Calls Out Penn State; Penn State Responds

As part of her effort to bring common sense back into collegiate sports, [Riley Gaines promoted today, Tuesday, as “Real Women’s Day.”](#) noting that today’s date in Roman Numerals — X-X-XXIII — “signifies what it means to be a woman, something innate in our very DNA: the science that defines a real woman.” Women have two X chromosomes at birth.

She was scheduled to speak at Penn State today but learned late last night that the school had canceled the event.

Gaines, the former competitive swimmer at the University of Kentucky, posted on X:



AP Images
Riley Gaines

No way President of Penn State makes a whole video explaining why public institutions are legally obligated to let “bigots” apparently like me on campus to speak [and] then proceeds to CANCEL my speech tomorrow for Real Women’s Day (X/X).

Have it your way. See ya tomorrow with a soap box and a megaphone, Penn State!

Gaines is referring to [a video the school posted last month](#) made by Penn State President Neeli Bendapudi explaining the school’s position regarding the First Amendment.

In that three-minute video, Bendapudi said:

I share the concerns of those who believe the messages spread by some individuals are not only offensive but deeply hurtful, and again I stand in unity with those who condemn such speakers and their rhetoric....

So what can we do about speakers who come to Penn State to anger, hurt and incite members of our community?

Speak out clearly and firmly against hateful speech as well as other instances of discrimination. Hurtful rhetoric causes real fear and anxiety among our community, and those individuals need your support.

Her presentation was a highly condensed version of Penn State’s [backgrounder on the First Amendment](#), which was assisted by the ACLU. Accordingly, it reflected the school’s bias in favor of “diversity, equity, and inclusion,” along with “belonging” and providing “safe places” for dissenters.

It appeared to reluctantly give First Amendment protections to dissenters such as Gaines: “Laws that defend free speech for bigots can be used to defend civil rights workers, anti-war protestors, LGBT activists, and others fighting for justice.”

The college added that there is an inherent right to protest speakers with viewpoints that are



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disagreeable:

To counter viewpoints you find unacceptable, University leaders encourage you to take part in alternative events and lend your voice and your presence to causes with which you are aligned and that help foster a stronger community.

Lawful protest is also an option for letting your voice be heard.

When social media exploded over the cancellation of Gaines' presentation, the school responded oh so reasonably:

As an institution of higher education, Penn State encourages free and open discussion as a way to strengthen our democracy and promote critical thinking and growth, and the university has a variety of speakers on its campuses.

No event featuring Riley Gaines has ever been canceled at Penn State.

Initially, Turning Point USA, the student group bringing Ms. Gaines to campus, sought indoor space, but did not meet the deadline for submitting the required reservation documents — an expectation upheld for any recognized student organization at Penn State.

The group then shared alternative plans for an outdoor event to celebrate free speech, and as late as last week they had no confirmation that Ms. Gaines would attend the event; however they sent a confirmation early this morning.

University leaders learned Monday evening via social media that Gaines is coming to the University Park campus on Oct. 10.

Penn State staff are in contact with the student organization to take steps to create a safe environment for the event, consistent with university policies and the First Amendment.

Whether Gaines is able to speak at Penn State tonight remains an open question. But this is part and parcel of the role that Gaines has taken on in the cancel-culture wars raging in the country.

It all started when she finished fifth to a transgender male masquerading as a female, Lia Thomas. Said Gaines:

We knew it was wrong — what was happening in regards to the competition and the locker room and the silencing. We all knew it was wrong, and even our coaches, they knew it was wrong.

I kept waiting, and waiting, and waiting for someone else to [speak up], because I thought it was someone else's job. I thought surely a coach would do it, or a parent — someone's dad would surely stick up for us, or someone with political power ... someone who is supposed to be protecting us would protect us.

It was then that she realized that it was up to her to protest:

I came to this realization of — if we as female athletes, we as women weren't willing to stick up for ourselves, how could we expect someone else to?



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That's when I kind of decided to take it upon myself to take a stance ... that men should not be in women's sports.

You're fully exposed ... but to add someone of the opposite sex with male genitalia, male eyes, a male gaze in that same room ... it's awkward, it's embarrassing, it's uncomfortable.

But it felt like betrayal. And I think the best word to describe it without being over-dramatic is "traumatic."

She learned early on just what standing up to the cancel culture would mean:

They'll label you ... transphobic, homophobic, racist, white supremacist, domestic terrorist, fascist.

But that's all it is — name-calling, because they don't have truth on their side, they don't have common sense, they don't have logic, or reasoning, or science on their side.

We do on our side. Therefore, the only way they can dissuade us from our argument is through petty, personal attacks.

Gaines called the war exactly what it is:

This is a spiritual battle.

I've always been spiritual. I grew up in the church. I'm very fortunate to have that firm foundation, but I will tell you, this past year ... I have seen very clearly how God works, and how He moves, and how He has His hand on me, most certainly.

It's a war with many battles and skirmishes. Tomorrow she is scheduled to speak in Waco, Texas, and on Friday in Richardson, Texas. After that she will be speaking at college campuses in Laramie, Wyoming, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Davis, California, Princeton, New Jersey, and Blacksburg, Virginia.

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