



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on October 12, 2023

Riley Gaines Heckled at Penn State

No doubt encouraged by Penn State's president, [protestors showed up at Riley Gaines' talk](#) on the campus at State College, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday afternoon.

In a video published a few weeks earlier, Penn State's President Neeli Bendapudi declared,

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.



YouTube
Riley Gaines speaking at Penn State

In a statement "clarifying" the above statement, which was crafted with the help of the ACLU, the university expanded on students' right to protest speakers whose views are "hateful" and "offensive":

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.

At least two of those protesters acted unlawfully during Tuesday's event ([see video here](#)), and were arrested and will be charged with disturbing the peace. Interestingly, the university issued a statement that those arrested were "two non-student individuals," thus putting distance between the university's rhetoric and the resulting disturbances.

Using a bullhorn because the university was unable or unwilling to accommodate her group's request for space in a building on campus to celebrate the first "Real Women's Day," Gaines spoke instead outside the Henderson Building:

We have people flipping tables and being arrested and protesting — for what? Again, let me reiterate: for saying men are men and women are women....

If I could give you guys any advice, stop saying "biological" woman, stop saying "biological" man, "biological male" or "biological female." That distinction is unnecessary. There is just male and female, man and woman.



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Her message resonated across the country, as more than 50 similar events took place on Tuesday, the first Real Women's Day.

To prove her point, her group set up a baseball backstop and a radar gun to show the physiological differences between the two sexes. When the results were in, Gaines concluded:

At Penn State, the fastest man threw a baseball 64 miles per hour, and the fastest woman threw 32 miles per hour ... which is exactly the point I'm trying to make.

On Wednesday, her event at Baylor University, a private Baptist college in Waco, Texas, went off without a hitch. This meant that she was free to more fully express her views, which included a jab at Lia Thomas. Thomas is the first openly transgender athlete to win a NCAA Division 1 freestyle event by competing against women. Said Gaines:

It was not fair that Will Thomas — or Lia, whatever Thomas self-identifies as now — got a whole segment during Women's History Month in March on ESPN, where there are other talented collegiate female swimmers to be interviewed.

Gaines pushed the Women's Bill of Rights, which has already been passed by Tennessee, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska:

This specific piece of legislation mirrors the 23 other states in our country which have passed fairness in sports bills over the past few years.

[This is] a major improvement from two years ago, when fairness in sports was only passed in Idaho.

Gaines will be speaking at college campuses in Richardson, Texas, on Friday, followed by events in Laramie, Wyoming; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Davis, California; Princeton, New Jersey; and Blacksburg, Virginia.

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