



Boldly Bringing a Biblical Perspective to Public Policy in the Land of Lincoln.

Misogyny: YMCA Springfield Puts Women Last

Illinois Freedom Caucus Press Conference

(July 13, 2023 at 1 PM, Springfield, Illinois)

Adam Niemerg: Okay. All right folks, thank you so much for being with us here this afternoon on this very important issue on this very important day. My name is Adam Niemerg. I'm a state representative. I represent the 102nd district in southeast Illinois. Folks, we're all aware of what's happening nationally is young women are being targeted just for daring to speak out against biological males, not only performing in women's sports, but also being allowed to invade their locker rooms. We have seen what has happened to Riley Gaines and so many like her for simply speaking the truth. The temptation is to simply dismiss what is happening as someone else's problem or as something that is happening in other states, but not here, so therefore, we don't have to worry about it.

We are here today because we no longer have the luxury of pretending this is somebody else's problem, or it's in some other place, far, far away from Illinois. We are here today because the war on truth has found its way into our own backyard. Coming up, you're going to hear from Abbigail Wheeler and her family, and the story they have to tell is nothing short of shocking. Abbigail was kicked off her swim team for simply objecting to having the same, having to share the same women's locker room at the YMC, just across the street with biological males. Instead of standing for truth and standing for the safety and protection of young women, the adults in charge not only sided with the biological males, but they punished those who dared to take a stand. Abbigail did nothing wrong. The adults who run the YMCA, the people who were supposed to protect them, they are the ones who failed.

Folks, biological males have no place changing in the same room as young women. The very idea that these young women should have to endure this affront on them and invasion of their privacy just to appease a woke ideology is madness. Folks, there are two locker rooms for a reason because there are two sexes. According to the national YMCA website, the YMCA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. The YMCA here in Springfield has failed to live up to its mission. It has failed to build a healthy spirit, mind and body, and it certainly has failed Abbigail Wheeler and the young women in their care. We are here to stand with Abbigail and her family and to stand for truth.

And with that, I'll let Abbigail and her family tell their story in their own words. Thank you.

Abbigail Wheeler: Good afternoon. My name is Abbigail Wheeler and I'm 16 years old. I'm grateful for the op... I'm grateful for the opportunity to share my story with you today. On April 27th, while attending swim practice at the YMCA, I went into the women's locker room to use the restroom. As I was headed to the stalls, I witnessed a man standing next to two other adults who were sitting on the changing benches. I also want to clarify a miscommunication that occurred in a previous interview. To be clear, I did not see the man naked and no male genitalia was exposed. However, I did see the man changing in the women's locker room.

After seeing the man in the women's locker room, I was scared and upset. I decided to leave immediately because I was alone with them and felt very uncomfortable. I went to my coach, Alex Totura, and told him that there is a man in the women's locker room. He responded that he was aware of it and there was nothing he could do. That is when I realized this was not my first time seeing this man in the women's locker room. About roughly four months earlier, I was, again, in the locker room changing with a group of girls out of our swimsuits. When I looked across the locker room, I saw what I thought was a very manly looking woman sitting on a chair in the corner wearing a women's swimsuit.

Even though it seemed suspicious, I didn't say anything and kept myself wrapped in my towel while changing. At this time, I had no reason to believe men were changing in the women's locker room at the YMCA. On May 10th, I spoke against my head coach, Alex Totura, and the CEO of the YMCA, Angie Sowle. When I asked my coach how long they knew that biological men were changing in the women's locker room, I was laughed at and told that, I quote, "Transgenders have been around a long time." I replied, "That is not what I asked," and restated the question to them.

Finally, the CEO responded that the YMCA had been aware for a while. I was also told that if I wasn't comfortable changing in the women's locker room, that I could use the family changing areas or not use the facilities at all.

Shortly after being told this, my teammate and I, Lucy... decided to make informative signs to let people know that biological men were changing in the women's locker room while parents and families were completely unaware and young girls were present.

The next day at practice, my head coach Alex and the YMCA Branch Director, Kenzie Primus, pulled the girls' team aside, telling us that hateful messages were hung in the women's locker room. They said that these signs were considered hate speech, discriminatory and disrespectful.

After talking with us, my teammate and I went to our coach and told him that we were gladly a part of this. I explained to him that the YMCA, the Young Men's Christian Association, and I was raised in a Christian home. I know what the Christian values are and the YMCA was not upholding the Christian values like they say they are.

He responded to me by saying that it would no longer be appropriate for us to practice with the team, and the YMCA would be in contact with our families, and we were sent home.

In that moment, I knew that my efforts in bringing awareness to the fact that biological men were using the women's changing spaces in the YMCA... weren't going to be enough. I did all the right things. I saw something that was obviously wrong and I told someone, I told my coach, someone who I'm supposed to trust, someone who I'm supposed to be able to come to when I feel unsafe or scared. Instead, all of my feelings of unsafety, fear and vulnerability were simply brushed aside. I was made to feel as though I was in the wrong. I was made to feel as though there was something wrong with me feeling uncomfortable changing in the women's locker room where biological men were being allowed to undress in the same space as me and my underage teammates.

Not only were my feelings discredited, but I was also removed from my swim team and banned from the YMCA. I am here in hopes that sharing my story will reach parents, future parents, coaches, churches, and members of the YMCA.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Illinois Freedom Caucus and the Independence Women's Forum for allowing me to share my story, and for everyone that has come out to support me today.

Someone in the crowd: You're a hero Abbigail.

Caitlynn Wheeler: Yes, she is. Hi everyone. I'm Caitlynn Wheeler. I'm Abbigail's older sister. I just want to thank you all for coming out today to support Abbigail and to listen to her story. As I listen to her speak, I try to picture myself in her shoes at 16 years old, and I just can't imagine myself standing up here at that age sharing a vulnerable story with you like that. The bravery, the courage, and the guts it takes to stand up here, I believe, comes from a greater power.

It's incredibly admirable and she has deeply inspired me to stand up and share my own story. I recently retired from the sport of swimming. And back in 2022, I competed at the Division 1 NCAA meet where many women, including myself, were forced to not only compete against, but change in the same locker room as a biological man identifying as Lia Thomas. This was far from an experience to which I felt comfortable or safe.

I cannot express the shock and feelings of extreme discomfort that were very real in that locker room when we were forced to share our changing space with a fully grown man. So to find out that now my little sister is going through the same thing is infuriating and disheartening.

Riley Gaines, who's a former friend, or is a good friend and former teammate of mine, many of you have probably heard of her, as well as Paula Scanlan, who is here with us today, are still currently fighting for women in this specific issue. She encourages people to take a stand and speak out.

We need more people to take a stand. Women have been told to stay silent, but we mustn't stay silent. We must speak and speak loudly.

And it can't just be women. We need men, fathers, sons, brothers to stand with us. Parents, you need to wake up. If this does not infuriate you or deeply bother you, or you feel like you can't do anything about it, you're part of the problem. My family has been impacted by this twice now, on two completely separate, non-related instances, and I know that we're not the first nor will we be the last if something isn't done. I don't have kids, but I hope that one day I'll be blessed enough to have a daughter of my own. I would even be more blessed if she takes after her mother and becomes an athlete.

I want my future daughter and your future daughter-

Audience: Yes!

Kaitlynn Wheeler: I want my future daughter and your future daughters to be able to not only compete fairly in sports but to be able to have safe changing spaces.

Audience: Yes!

Kaitlynn Wheeler: That is why I stand here today for her and for my little sister Abigail, and for the other little girls out there who may not have a voice because that's what it's going to take. Today Abigail has shared her story with you all, so now you have no excuse for not knowing what's happening. You have a responsibility, and so those of you in authority who were told and did nothing shame on you and I hope it haunts you at night.

Audience: Yes!

Kaitlynn Wheeler: Now that you know Abigail's story, if you aren't doing something about it you're guilty of allowing it to happen. If it's not knocking on your door already it is, or it will and when it does, it will be too late. We must protect our children and we must stand up for our freedoms or they will continue to be stripped away. So I stand with Abigail and I hope you will too, thank you.

Audience: Come on Dan, you got this.

Dan Wheeler: Well, good afternoon. My name is Dan, the Dad and if you haven't realized it already I have some pretty amazing women in my life.

Audience: [Cheering]

Dan Wheeler: To be clear, my family's involvement in this press conference today is nothing more than an effort to shed light on a dangerous practice of allowing biological males in the locker room of the YMCA right here behind us. Further to share with you the gross manner in which my daughter Abigail was treated when she took action after repeated attempts to obtain clarification of this confusing and unsafe situation. From her coach and multiple YMC administrative staff whose primary focus should be on the wellbeing of all members children of the swim team.

Audience: That's right, come one Dan.

Dan Wheeler: Now, I'm a 13-year vet of the world of swimming by way of officiating. I am certified by USA Swimming with NCAA credentials and I also hold YMCA officiating credentials. I am required to go through complete background check every year and take athlete protection training. Through this training we are taught to identify unsafe situations that put our children, minors in harm's way. Through this training we become required reporters, which by the way an official certification is no different than a coach's certification. Coach Totura goes through the same training of athlete protection that I do as an official and we're required to report instances of unsafe situations with our children.

Audience: Right. Yep. He failed.

Dan Wheeler: Yet when an unsafe situation presents itself, exactly what we were talking about today. The coach's response was, "There's nothing I can do about it."

Audience: That's baloney.

Dan Wheeler: "If you don't like it, you should go change in the family changing areas."

Audience: Yeah.

Dan Wheeler: Basically, his hands are tied right? They're not.

Audience: They're not.

Dan Wheeler: I submit to you today that this practice of allowing biological males in the same locker room as minor girls is dangerous and unacceptable to me.

Audience: Right.

Dan Wheeler: Now I'm not here to advocate for Abigail and her teammate Lucy, that's not the purpose today. Abigail and Lucy are out of harm's way, they've left the team and they are now participating on another team.

Audience: Good for you.

Dan Wheeler: The actions of the coach and numerous YMCA administrative staff forced Abigail and Lucy off the swim team and caused my family to terminate our membership with the YMCA.

Audience: Come on.

Dan Wheeler: Rather, we stand here today in unity to advocate for all the families that drop their children off at the YMCA in Springfield by bringing awareness to a flawed policy based on my opinion. An improper interpretation of current state statute that allows children to be potentially exposed to individuals from the opposite biological sex in the girl's locker rooms.

Audience: Come on. All right. Yep.

Dan Wheeler: I don't think any of us would disagree that the YMCA should be a safe place for our children, for our grandchildren.

Audience: Yes.

Dan Wheeler: For our wives.

Audience: Yeah.

Dan Wheeler: They should be able to enjoy a community with friends and to experience team sports in a safe environment.

Audience: Yes. Right.

Dan Wheeler: Thank you.

Someone in the crowd: Good job Wheelers. I'm proud of you guys.

Kaitlynn Wheeler: Next, we're going to be hearing from Paula Scanlon. So Paula, if you wouldn't mind coming up.

Audience: Come on Paula. You got this.

Paula Scanlon: I want to thank the Illinois Freedom Caucus and Independent Women's Forum for organizing this conference here today. My name is Paula Scanlon and I am a recent graduate from the University of Pennsylvania, where I was a member of the women's swim team.

My senior year a male individual named Leah Thomas was allowed to compete for the women's team. I know firsthand the dangers of allowing men into women's spaces and when I first heard about what happened at the Springfield YMCA I was heartbroken. I began my swimming career at our local YMCA in Connecticut, growing up swimming for the YMCA was a highlight of my childhood. I was able to be a part of a community of people I knew shared my values, beliefs and passions. I have seen many different communities crumble by allowing men in women's spaces and I never thought the YMCA, a community meant to uphold Christian values would fall to this. Yet here we are.

Audience: Yep, here we are.

Paula Scanlon: Communities like the YMCA are meant to protect young girls, yet they have normalized exposing them to males in spaces where they're most vulnerable. From a young age, my mother would take me into the locker room and help me change for practice. As I got older, I started to feel more comfortable entering the locker room on my own. Locker rooms are a place where you become comfortable with being vulnerable and my YMCA I always felt safe and protected. It breaks my heart that other girls across the country are not awarded these same protections.

Audience: Come on, that's right.

Paula Scanlon: As women and girls we deserve to feel safe in our own spaces and have the right to privacy and respect, especially when young girls frequent them. When I heard about what happened to Abbigail Wheeler, I knew it was important for me to stand behind her and support her. The YMCA swimming community brought me so many opportunities and to deny even one girl from that is a great injustice.

Audience: Yes.

Paula Scanlon: It is important we come together now and stand up for what we know is the truth. The truth that men in women's spaces is wrong, unsafe and unfair.

Audience: Yes, come on.

Paula Scanlon: The message the YMCA of Springfield has sent to all women is that our safety doesn't matter, nor does our privacy, our fairness, our equal opportunities or our dignity.

Audience: Right. That's right.

Paula Scanlon: I along with the Independent Women's Forum urge the YMCA of Springfield, Illinois to reconsider their policy.

Audience: Yes.

Paula Scanlon: Males have no place in women's locker room among females especially minors, teenage girls and even younger.

Audience: Yes.

Paula Scanlon: Additionally, no girl should be kicked off her swim team for using her first amendment right to free speech.

Audience: Yes, come on.

Paula Scanlon: The YMCA of Springfield needs to be held accountable and they should admit to wrongdoing for their treatment of Abbigail Wheeler and the other young girls on her swim team. I am so proud of Abbigail for finding her voice and standing up for the truth and I urge every young girl that is in a similar situation to do the same.

Audience: Right, yeah. Come on.

Paula Scanlon: We all must work together to protect all girls and women across the country and with the help of legislators and passing of legislation such as the Women's Bill of Rights, we can.

Audience: Yes.

Paula Scanlon: I now just have a few words from Riley who it's unfortunate that she cannot join us today but she did give me some things she wants to share, so I'm going to read that on her behalf. "A few weeks ago I got a call from my former teammate at the University of Kentucky and one of my best friends still to this day, Caitlyn

Wheeler. She was in tears describing what her sister Abbigail went through on her swim team at the local Springfield YMCA.

Although Caitlyn was impacted in essentially the same way at our NCAA championship regarding the infamous Leah Thomas situation. She expressed when it had happened to her sister, her altruistic instinct kicked in and she knew they couldn't just sit back and knowingly let this happen to another girl." I'm proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with these brave women in this fight, we are a team and this team is being heard.

Paula Scanlon: We as women demand respect, privacy, safety and fairness in our sports. To compromise that in any way can only be described as utter misogyny.

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Why are we being made to feel guilty for not wanting to undress in front of, while simultaneously being exposed to, a naked male? Why are we called transphobic for simply wanting fairness and equal opportunity in our sports?

People always wonder why more women, especially the female athletes directly impacted by these issues aren't speaking up. This is why. They don't want to be labeled as a bigot or suffer the consequences for daring to ask unanswered questions.

Consider this a public request for Coach Totura and Angie Sowle to admit the wrongdoing by punishing Abbigail for merely wanting a women's locker room specifically for females. If leaders cannot find it in themselves to defend our girls, then we need different leaders and laws like the Women's Bill of Rights and other protections for women's equal opportunities. Our next generation of girls deserve to see themselves as champions and it's time we find our voices like Abbigail has.

Audience: You girls are brave. You girls are brave. [inaudible 00:26:00] Yep.

Chris Miller: I want to know you to know that I love your t-shirt. You going to turn around and show the crowd? How about that?

Oh, I'll tell you what. What a great day for Raleigh, for the Wheeler family and I'm so grateful for their courage. My name is Chris Miller and I'm the state representative for the 101st District and I'm also the chairman of the Illinois Freedom Caucus. Make no mistake, what's happened to Abbigail and her family is a wake up call for parents across our state as well as our nation. My wife, Mary Miller, serves in Congress. And she's fighting every day for situations just like this. And she regrets not being here, but one thing that she did was she brought to my attention before she left what is actually happening in real time to these people.

Mary and I are proud parents of five daughters, five daughters, and we just welcomed our ninth granddaughter over the weekend, and so this issue is very near and dear to my heart. What kind of world will our girls inherit if the adults who are supposed to protect them are paralyzed by political correctness?

Abigail's coach and the adults in charge at the YMCA should have been on her side. And they should have erred on the side of truth, logic, and common sense. They should have protected the girls and the young women in the locker room. But yet they decided to align themselves with the radical left political agenda ahead of the safety and security of those young girls. The adults and those involved at the YMCA should be ashamed of their spineless, spineless behavior.

Mary has been warning what's happened to Abigail is about to become a daily reality for young girls across our country if we don't stand up. We know that Governor Pritzker is a radical who believes that adult men should be allowed to undress and expose themselves in front of minor girls [inaudible 00:28:54] fortunate the billionaire in his power as governor to force his trans agenda on our culture.

Governor Pritzker, I don't know if you're aware of this, but he just told the schools that they must allow pornography in the school library or lose their state funding. We stand horrified at this proclamation, but at least, at least we know what we're dealing with rather than people throwing up their hands and saying, "Oh, we can't do anything." Baloney.

The question is now for parents is what are you going to do? Where are you going to stand? Let me tell you, there's three things that the Illinois Freedom Caucus is going to do. We are here today to say that we will not allow the radical left to use fear and intimidation to silence us. I don't know if you picked up on this, but guess what? We're not scared and we will never, ever, ever be intimidated.

We'll never stop fighting for the young girls who deserve their safe spaces and privacy. And we will make sure that every parent in this state knows of this child abuse that is taking place in real time right before their eyes. I want to thank Abigail and her family for their courage and their conviction to stand up. But I would like to challenge every parent here, not only to stand up to, but to speak up and to consider the long view of this event today. What kind of world, what kind of world will we leave our daughters if we keep silent? Thank you very much and God bless.

Dave Friess: Thank you. My name is Dave Friess. I'm a state representative from the 115th. And in addition to that I'm also a practicing attorney and also the father of a 16-year-old daughter who is a student athlete, so this is very near and dear to my heart. Yes, I'm honored to stand here today alongside my colleagues in Illinois Freedom Caucus and alongside Abigail Wheeler and her family.

My comments today will be directed towards this false notion that the YMCA and similar facilities are somehow bound to allow the men who identify as women into women's locker rooms and other private female spaces. One of the laws that is commonly misquoted and misrepresented on this topic is the Illinois Human Rights Act. The Illinois Human Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity states that there's an exception. Nothing in this article shall apply to facilities distinctly private, any facility as to discrimination based

on sex, which is distinctly private in nature such as restrooms, shower rooms, bathhouses and health clubs.

Officials and people of authority, including those in Abbigail's case, fail to properly understand the law. Instead, they subordinated statutory law, the Human Rights Act to case law citing two cases, the ACLU lawsuit against School District 211, which resulted in biological boys who identify as girls being given the legal right to unrestricted access to girls private spaces. And a Hobby lobby store versus Somerville, a lawsuit that resulted in employers being prohibited from discriminating based on either sex or gender identity in bathroom usage, policy and practice.

If radical case law pertaining to sex and gender identity prevails, the inescapable result will be the eradication of all sex segregated private spaces for everyone. Regardless of what individuals are concerned about, whether it's statutory authority or case law, the simple truth is that Abbigail and her teammates and every woman should be protected in these private spaces.

The source of confusion comes for the recent bastardization of definitions of sex and gender. I cannot believe we're having this debate on what a man is and whether or not biological men should be allowed in women's locker room utilized by school-aged girls and children. Moving forward I fully anticipate that my colleagues and I will propose legislation to try and reform these statutes based on biological gender assigned at birth and if need be the actual-

Audience: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Dave Friess: And the actual anatomy of a person. We are willing to support whatever it takes to encourage other lawmakers, facility staff, and the general public to reconsider their positions on these issues and to prevent more stories like Abbigail's from needing to be told. Thank you very much for coming out.

Brad Halbrook: Thank you. My name is Brad Halbrook, state representative in the 107th and founding member of the Illinois Freedom Caucus. We've-

Audience: Thank you.

Brad Halbrook: We've heard from several speakers today, so I'm going to keep my comments brief and we'll be taking questions as soon as I conclude from the press. First of all, I want to continue to echo the comments of the speakers before me who have correctly said that the real heroes today are Abbigail and her family. It's an absolute shame when an irresponsible government and irresponsible leaders would put an extreme agenda ahead of the safety of our children and young girls. However, in the face of that irresponsibility, Abbigail and her family are doing the most powerful thing possible to do and that's sharing their story. Her and her sister, Caitlin, both sharing their story. Her and her sister Caitlin both have fallen victim to the woke agenda that, frankly, puts women and girls last and elevates men, who are confused about their gender.

Speaking out about these issues is not easy. We are so proud of these young ladies. As lawmakers, it's stories like this today that direct our conversations underneath the State Capitol Dome just a few miles away from here. With that in mind, let me be clear about something, when these subjects come up in committee, in floor debate, whatever else, we will no longer accept the blatant lie, and I quote, "It really isn't happening."

We stand here today with a family who has experienced this multiple times. They are just one of the first to be brave enough to speak out about it. Thank you, Rylie Gaines for being a trailblazer on this front as well. My fellow lawmakers and I in attendance today are a part of a minority party, and we know how that affects the legislative process in Springfield. However, this should not be a party line issue. Neither Republican nor Democrat.

You have heard today from family members multiple times about they truly desire to not make this political and we respect them for doing that. Today is about bringing awareness to an issue that they are passionate about. I hope that we are able to carry this story throughout the state and throughout the country, as we have been doing on national media outlets and that Abigail's story will ring loud under the State Capitol Dome when it comes to further debate on public policy issue. The Illinois Freedom Caucus will work tirelessly to accomplish this.

To close, we can put this issue simply, female locker rooms should be for females, biological females. If you are an intact male, you do not belong in a female locker room and, frankly, you do not belong in women's sports either.

If those statements sound controversial or offensive to you, the reality is that the truth does not yield to hurt feelings. Again, I want to thank you on behalf of this family and the Freedom Caucus for coming out. At this time, we're going to take questions but before we begin, I'd like to note that questions directed towards the family must be germane to the topic that we are discussing here today, and if the family feels uncomfortable answering any of those questions that are presented, we will move onto the next question.

Additionally, any follow up questions can be directed to the email that was in your media advisory. With that, thank you very much.

Media: It was said on national news, you said it here today and several others saying that Abigail was banned from the YMCA. Can you clarify that? My understanding is that she withdrew on her own, because of what happened. You also stated this today that you withdrew your membership from the Y. Can you clarify that was Abigail [inaudible 00:39:36]?

Dan Wheeler: Absolutely. It's a great question. It's one that the Y chooses to stand firm and their response is that they did not kick Abigail off the team, but the fact of the matter is they made it impossible for her to continue with the team.

What I mean by that is they found out about the signs, they approached the girls team, Abigail and her teammate Lucy went straight up to the coach afterwards and said, "We were part of this. This is something we did, because we got no resolution on this matter when I approached you the last three times", so they hung signs up. They wanted to share their mind. They wanted to share what they were feeling, because they weren't being received by the coach or the Y administration, so they kicked out of practice that night. They were told they couldn't come back to the practice, and they were told they couldn't come into the Y until they had a meeting with her.

Okay. I called, I'm a trained USA official, I called USA Swimming SafeSport. They were very interested in our story. They wanted to attend the meeting. I called Kenzie Primus back the next day. I said, "We're going to take your meeting, so Abigail can continue with the team, but I have two members I'd like to have come to this meeting." She said, "Sure. Who are they?" I told, "Executive director of USA Swimming SafeSport and a manager." She said okay.

The next day, I get an email from Jill Steiner, said, "Heard you want to bring SafeSport people to the meeting. I'm the SafeSport person for the Y." Jill Steiner is the SafeSport person for this Y. She said, "Don't need those people. I'm the person."

I emailed her back. I said, "I don't understand. I'm confused." I have the email right here, I could read it to you but I said, "I'm confused. Why won't you allow us to be represented in this meeting?" I concluded that email, I said, "At a minimum, the Y ought to have a meeting with the two affected families, my family and Lucy's family."

Email immediately back from Jill Steiner that said, "Nope. Meeting is with Abigail." At that point, Dad understood exactly what the path forward here was, to pass judgment and punishment on my daughter and Dad stood up and said, "You know what? My daughter has been punished enough."

I didn't accept the meeting and by default, we had to leave the Y, and she had to quit the team, so that's how that happened.

Media: You're saying that, at first, they said you're not allowed in the Y or that a meeting would happen? Then the meeting didn't happen, so you withdrew? Just so I have a better understanding-

Dan Wheeler: I think I laid it out pretty clearly.

Media: Okay. Just to followup, the YMCA provided us the email that said your family is withdrawing from the YMCA and pulling Abigail off the team. Just to clarify, because the meeting was only going to be with Abigail, that's why you withdrew her from the-

Dan Wheeler: Yeah. Again, I think I was very clear on this. That's why I think this is a very important point to bring up here. It was conditional. Our return, Abigail's return to the Y was conditional based upon their conditions, us meeting with them to dictate

to us and pass along judgment to my daughter and that was not going to happen under my control.

Media: I have a question for Abigail. When you saw that man in the locker room, [inaudible 00:43:19] identified as trans, that's how that person got in, how could you tell that was a man? Did you feel threatened? If so, why? Why did you feel threatened?

Dan Wheeler: Well, I think-

Media: Can I ask her?

Dan Wheeler: Yeah. You can ask the family. I am representing the family at this point.

Someone in the crowd: Good for you, Dan.

Dan Wheeler: Abigail has gone through a lot. She's a 16 year old girl.

Audience: That's right.

Dan Wheeler: This is something that she's laid her story out succinctly, in a manner of everything that happened, exactly to what her experience was, and, just to clarify, she was in the locker room, she noticed a manly individual in there, left, came back another time, noticed the same individual undressing and wasn't naked but undressing, same situation.

She's 16. She can see an individual who is a male or a female in her locker room.

Media: Just to followup, just on Dean's question there, with this whole interaction, was there at any point that the person that was in the locker room was, in any way, addressing you directly or-

Someone in the crowd: It doesn't matter.

Dan Wheeler: Let me answer it. I want you to know our family's position. It's not whether a biological male is naked, whether a biological male is leering, whether a biological male has a camera out, it's the fact that there's a biological male in the girls' locker room.

Brad Halbrook: Last question. Right here, behind your head. Last question.

Media: [inaudible 00:45:41] next step for you and your family?

Dan Wheeler: That's a good question. I appreciate it. Asked about the legality of this. As a dad, somebody who loves their family, my number one goal is to protect my family.

Someone in the crowd: Good for you, Dan.

Dan Wheeler: I'm not stating or going further into the future. We're here now, but something very similar, I've been asked, "Why are you doing this?" I don't want to do this. I've prayed about this.

The resounding response that I continue to receive is, "Dan, wake up. You have three girls. This has happened to two of them. Does it really take all three of them where this situation has to happen to all three of them before you speak out?" No. I'm speaking out, I'm telling our story. It has no political affiliation. It has no position as far as suing anybody or any of that. We're not going down that road.

We're telling our story. Our story is there are biological males allowed to be in the locker room at the YMCA, which is not acceptable to our family, in our opinion.

Brad Halbrook: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you all for coming out. In the interest of your safety under this heat, we're going to close down. Thank you all again for coming out.

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