



STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

GARLIN GILCHRIST II
LT. GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER

No. 2019-16

Task Force on Women in Sports

Department of State

Multiple studies have documented that women who play sports are more likely to seek and fill leadership roles in other sectors. Yet even with the enactment of Title IX nearly fifty years ago, opportunities for girls and women in sports, while improved, remain severely limited.

These limitations intersect with what is now a pivotal moment for gender equality and opportunity in Michigan. More women leaders are serving in state and federal government than ever before, but there is still much work to be done. Women of color, for instance, continue to be underrepresented in government and in all other industries, and women hold just 15 percent of board seats at Michigan's 100 largest companies.

Women and girls of all backgrounds derive countless benefits from opportunities to play sports – from lessons in confidence, courage, resilience, and perseverance, to gains in physical health and psychological well-being. Female athletes defy gender stereotypes, serve as role models, and widen perspectives.

Nonetheless, and even with the protections of Title IX, women continue to receive fewer opportunities in sports. They encounter lower levels of investment, training resources, and safety assurances than their male counterparts – disparities that are further stratified by income and race. This is exacerbated by the imbalance of female leadership in college sports; currently in Michigan, for instance, only one Division 1 athletic program is led by a woman. When women succeed as professional athletes, they meet a glass ceiling and a substantial pay gap – barriers that extend to leadership positions with professional leagues and teams, as well as in sports agencies, clothing companies, and marketing firms.

This inequity in access and opportunity prevents girls and women in this state from fully accessing the benefits in leadership development that sports can provide – to the detriment of not only these girls and women, but also this state, which stands to gain from their leadership. Michigan and its residents would benefit from a task force that brings together local and national leaders in sports and education to evaluate this problem, develop strategies to support and promote opportunities in this state for girls and women in sports, and position Michigan as a lasting model in creating and advancing women leaders.

Section 1 of article 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 vests the executive power of the State of Michigan in the governor.

Section 8 of article 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 places each principal department of state government under the supervision of the governor unless otherwise provided.

Section 8 of article 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 obligates the governor to take care that the laws are faithfully executed.

Acting pursuant to the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and Michigan law, I order the following:

1. Creation of the Task Force on Women in Sports

(a) The Task Force on Women in Sports (the “Task Force”) is created as an advisory body within the Department of State (“Department”), and shall consist of the following members:

- (1) the secretary of state; and
- (2) 14 individuals appointed by the governor.

(b) A vacancy on the Task Force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(c) The secretary of state shall serve as chairperson of the Task Force.

2. Charge to the Task Force

(a) The Task Force shall act in an advisory capacity to the governor and shall do the following:

- (1) Assess the history of and current landscape for girls and women in sports in Michigan.
- (2) Develop recommendations for legislation, policies, investments, and programs to support and promote opportunities in Michigan for girls and women in sports. The goals of these recommendations shall include yielding greater opportunities for female athletes at the youth, high school, and collegiate level, and expanding professional opportunities for women leaders in sports, both on and off the field.
- (3) Provide other information or advice or take other actions as requested by the governor.

(b) The Task Force shall complete its work and submit a final report to the governor detailing its initial findings and recommendations by February 28, 2021. The Task Force is dissolved on June 30, 2022.

3. Operations of the Task Force

- (a) The Department shall assist the Task Force in the performance of its duties and provide personnel to staff the Task Force. The budgeting, procurement, and related management functions of the Task Force shall be performed under the direction and supervision of the secretary of state.
- (b) The Task Force shall adopt procedures, consistent with this order and applicable law, governing its organization and operations.
- (c) The Task Force shall comply with the Freedom of Information Act, 1976 PA 442, as amended, MCL 15.231 to 15.246.
- (d) The Task Force shall comply with the Open Meetings Act, 1976 PA 267, as amended, MCL 15.261 to 15.275.
- (e) The Task Force may select from among its members a vice chairperson.
- (f) The Task Force may select from among its members a secretary. Task Force staff shall assist the secretary with recordkeeping responsibilities.
- (g) The Task Force shall meet at the call of its chairperson and as otherwise provided in the procedures adopted by the Task Force.
- (h) A majority of the members of the Task Force serving constitutes a quorum for the transaction of the business of the Task Force. The Task Force must act by a majority vote of its serving members.
- (i) The Task Force may establish advisory workgroups composed of individuals or entities participating in Task Force activities or other members of the public as deemed necessary by the Task Force to assist it in performing its duties and responsibilities. The Task Force may adopt, reject, or modify any recommendations proposed by an advisory workgroup.
- (j) The Task Force may, as appropriate, make inquiries, studies, and investigations, hold hearings, and receive comments from the public. The Task Force also may consult with outside experts in order to perform its duties, including experts in the private sector, organized labor, government agencies, and at institutions of higher education.
- (k) The Task Force may hire or retain contractors, sub-contractors, advisors, consultants, and agents, and may make and enter into contracts necessary or incidental to the exercise of the powers of the Task Force and the performance of its duties as the secretary of state deems advisable and necessary, consistent with this order and applicable law, rules and procedures, subject to available funding.
- (l) The Task Force may accept donations of labor, services, or other things of value from any public or private agency or person. Any donations shall be received and used in accordance with law.

- (m) Members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation, but may receive reimbursement for necessary travel and expenses consistent with applicable law, rules, and procedures, and subject to available funding.
- (n) Members of the Task Force shall refer all legal, legislative, and media contacts to the Department.

4. Implementation

- (a) All departments, committees, commissioners, or officers of this state shall give to the Task Force, or to any member or representative of the Task Force, any necessary assistance required by the Task Force, or any member or representative of the Task Force, in the performance of the duties of the Task Force so far as is compatible with their duties and consistent with this order and applicable law. Free access also must be given to any books, records, or documents in their custody relating to matters within the scope of inquiry, study, or review of the Task Force, consistent with applicable law.
- (b) Nothing in this order shall be construed to change the organization of the executive branch of state government or the assignment of functions among its units, in a manner requiring the force of law.
- (c) This order is not intended to abate a proceeding commenced by, against, or before an officer or entity affected by this order. A proceeding may be maintained by, against, or before the successor of any officer or entity affected by this order.
- (d) If any portion of this order is found to be unenforceable, the unenforceable provision should be disregarded and the rest of the order should remain in effect as issued.
- (e) This order is effective upon filing.

Given under my hand and the great seal of the State of Michigan.

Date: June 17, 2019

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

By the Governor:

JOCELYN BENSON
SECRETARY OF STATE