



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Compelled to Speak Out

Guest(s): Riley Gaines

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- Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.
- Roger Marsh: Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and today we have a very special program for you. Gary Bauer is with me here in studio, and we're going to talk about one of the more controversial videos that we posted on our Countdown to Decision 2024 website and involves the issue of transgender athletes competing in women's sports. This is definitely a topic of conversation for parents only, so parental discretion definitely advised if you have younger listeners with us and with you listening to the broadcast today. Gary Bauer, of course, our senior vice president of Public Policy here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. And Gary, it's good to have you on the program today.
- Gary Bauer: Well, thank you, Roger. It's always great to be with you. And of course Family Talk is, I think, and I know you agree, must listening for America particularly at a time like this, and I'm excited today. I'm sure you are too, that we're going to spend some time listening to and hearing the thoughts of Riley Gaines. She of course, was the University of Kentucky championship swimmer who suddenly found herself in the middle of one of the big controversies that is erupted in the United States in recent years.
- Roger Marsh: Let's talk about this issue. When you think about it from the standpoint of there are a lot of people who hear these stories and they think, "Well, it couldn't possibly be that bad." How bad have things really gotten in this area and why is this even an issue during the 2024 election? Talk a little bit about that before we get into this clip from Riley Gaines.
- Gary Bauer: Yeah, absolutely. All of a sudden, this issue erupted all over the country, and it's everything from grown men claiming they identify as women, demanding the right to compete in women's sports against actual young women like Riley Gaines. But it's even worse than that, Roger. It is gotten into the schools all over the place. Of course, curriculum is being introduced and some of the states around America that are the most liberal, have liberal governors and state legislatures, some of those states have actually said that as a parent, you should

have no rights in deciding how your child, your son or daughter is treated, or what happens that that son or daughter all of a sudden they claim they're trapped in the wrong body.

We've got here in Washington, the Biden-Harris administration literally has taken all of the power of the Justice Department and the Department of Education and they're threatening parents and they're threatening local school districts unless they go along with this radical ideology. And let me mention something that I'm still shaking my head about. The Biden-Harris Department of Education proposed rules a couple of years ago that if you didn't allow men and boys to go into your daughter or granddaughters bathrooms, locker rooms and changing rooms in the public schools and even in Christian schools, that they were going to cut off aid to families, to children that are low income in those schools.

So unless you did this, those children would not be able to get subsidized breakfasts and lunches at the local school. Now, thankfully, a lot of courts have blocked this mainly because judges appointed by the previous president, President Trump said, wait a minute, that's unconstitutional, but this really is an issue that is widespread and it's some way it's on the ballot in November.

Roger Marsh:

It really is when you consider that, of course Joe Biden isn't running, but his vice president, Kamala Harris is, and her running mate, Tim Walz has a reputation for being a socialist, a progressive, someone who's sympathetic to these causes. And so it really has become a binary choice for a lot of voters and a lot of the people in the electorate, which is why I think today's edition of Family Talk is so important. Gary, let's get into this now, this clip from Riley Gaines. This is part of our Countdown to Decision 2024 video series that is up at drjamesdobbson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024. Let's hear this conversation featuring Riley Gaines talking about transgender ideologies in public schools today here on Family Talk.

Riley Gaines:

So I come from a family of athletes, and so my dad, he was an NFL player. My mom, she played division one softball. My oldest sister played softball at Ole Miss. My brother, he's in college playing football now. My youngest sister, she's only 15, but she's an elite level gymnast and will go on to do incredible things. All that to say, I come from a family of athletics, of sports, of playing sports, of competing, of winning, to be honest with you. And so playing a sport wasn't really an option for me or my siblings. I started swimming when I was about four, graduated when I was 22. So I mean, I really dedicated 18 years of my life to my sport, which parents listening to this, grandparents listening to this, maybe former athletes yourself, you know what this is like, you know the time, you know the hours, you know the dedication, the sacrifices that you have to make to compete at, but ultimately be successful at the highest level.

I was no different. You don't get to go to prom. You don't get to have sleepovers on Friday night because guess what, you have practice at six A.M. on Saturday morning. You don't get to go on family vacation. No, none of that. But I was

willing to do that because again, I knew I had to. I was very fortunate to be pretty heavily recruited, truth be told. I could have gone anywhere in the country that I wanted to go to continue pursuing my athletic dreams and continue further my academic career. And so I ended up choosing the University of Kentucky, which there really could not have been a better place for me. And so my college experience, it was nothing short of crazy in the way that we dealt with Covid.

I'll be the first person to say that being a college athlete during that time, really being a college student, I mean, arguably being a human during that time was miserable, in terms of the social distancing and the contact tracing and the mandatory vaccines and the mask mandates. That was certainly not fun when playing an aquatic sport. We essentially waterboarded ourselves every day with those masks. But I digress, and we were robbed of an NCAA championships in that way. We didn't get to compete at that championship, me at my sophomore year, which again is the pinnacle of our sport. And so we got sent home for a couple of months, eventually got to return back to school in my junior year. This is ultimately when I won my first individual SEC title. This is when University of Kentucky win its first ever team title in program history. And ultimately my junior year, I ended up placing seventh in the country, which I was proud of to be top A. You're an All-American. It's a pretty high honor, but I knew I was capable of more.

I didn't go my best time. And so it was really right then and there that I placed seventh in the country my junior year that I set a goal for my senior year to win a national title, which would of course mean becoming the fastest woman in the country. And so senior year rolls around, and I am right on pace to achieve this goal. About midway through my senior year, I was ranked third in the country, trailing the girl in second, a girl I knew very well by a few one hundredths of a second, but the person who was leading the nation by body lengths, might I add, was a swimmer that none of us had ever heard of before. Not me, not my coaches, not my teammates, not my family, not my other competitors, none of us. And this is the first time we became aware of a swimmer named Lia Thomas.

There were a lot of red flags at the time. Keep in mind, we hadn't seen a photo of this person or else things probably would've been a little more clear. But for all I knew at the time, this was a senior from University of Pennsylvania, which is not a school that has ever historically produced that caliber of swimmer, leading the nation again by body lengths and events ranging from the hundred freestyle, which is a sprint, all the freestyle events in between through the mile, which if you don't understand swimming, I mean, think about that last piece in terms of your Olympic runners. That's like saying your best 200 meter runner is your best marathon runner. It doesn't happen, but that's what we were seeing in this person. And so I'm scratching my head talking to my coaches, "Who is this?" We didn't know and we continued to stay in the dark until an article came out disclosing that Lia Thomas was actually Will Thomas and swam three years on the men's team at University of Pennsylvania before deciding to switch to the women's team.

And so I remember when I read this, I was shocked. Naturally, we were all shocked, my whole team. This was never even a possibility in our minds of how this could be. So while I was shocked though, I think more so there was this overwhelming sense of relief is how I felt because I went to look up who Will Thomas was, and I saw that this was a mediocre man competing in his rightful category, ranking in the five hundredths and four hundredths nationally, the year prior, again, when competing in the men's category, which is why I thought the NCAA would see it how I saw it. Again, how my teammates saw it, how anyone with any amount of functioning brain capacity would probably see this. Nothing hateful about it, nothing even opinionated about it. The mere facts on the paper in front of us that this was not a lateral movement, but lo and behold, the NCAA did not see it that way.

They saw absolutely nothing wrong with this. And so it was about three weeks before national Championships in March of 2022 that they announced that Thomas's participation in the women's category was a non-negotiable, meaning there was nothing that we could do about it. There were no questions that we could ask, no concerns that we could raise. We were quite literally told we had to accept this with a smile on our face. I saw the tears from girls, from their parents, their moms in the stands. I felt actually the extreme discomfort in the locker room. When you turn around, there's a six-foot four 22-year-old man, fully intact, fully exposing himself, naked, inches away from where you were simultaneously fully undressed. I heard the whispers of anger and frustration from those girls who just like myself, had worked our entire lives to get to this meet, again, the highest level of our sport.

That first day I watched as Thomas swam to a national title in the 500 freestyle. This is not an event that I do. And so I was on the side of the pool. He beat out Olympians. I mean females, women we just saw win Olympic medals in the Olympics. He beat them all by body lengths. The next day of competition was the 200 free, which was the event that he and I raced in. And so we get on the blocks and we dive off and we swim eight laps of freestyle and touch the wall at the end. And I look up at the scoreboard and almost impossibly enough, Thomas and I had gone the exact same time down to the hundredth of a second, meaning that we had tied, which is pretty rare when you're racing for a minute and 40 ish seconds and not even one 100th of a second separated us, which embarrassing on his part, he couldn't even beat me.

But also looking back, I mean the only way to explain it is divine intervention. And so we get out of the water and we go behind the awards' podium where the NCAA official looked at both Thomas and myself. And this is what really thrust me over the edge personally. And the official looked at me and actually appreciate his honesty. He said to me, "Riley, I'm so sorry." And he looked sad, understand his face changed, his voice changed. I could tell he didn't even believe what he was about to say, but he said, "Riley, I'm so sorry, but we have been advised as an organization that when photos are being taken, it's crucial that the trophy is in Lia's hands." That's all I needed to hear. We felt betrayed. We felt violated, especially in the locker room. That was total and utter

violation. We felt traumatized, truthfully, and not even necessarily, again, speaking to the locker room, not even necessarily traumatized because of what we were forced to see or how we were forcibly and non-consensually exploited.

I think it was more traumatizing for me to know that this was an organization that I trusted, that I loved. Really, I just worked my whole life to be the best that I could be for and in this organization. And they threw us under the bus without even a second thought, without even, I mean, bare minimum forewarning us. I mean, it was the ultimate act of betrayal. They were prioritizing inclusion over safety, number one, over fairness, number two, over our dignity, our feelings. I mean, they reduced all of that down to a photo op. That's how I think we felt in that moment. The response, it's interesting because this meet, this NCAA Championships, it's basically a week-long meet. And so that first day when he won the national title, I remember the vibe on the pool deck was, it was like I said, it was like whispers and people would say under their breath like, "Oh my gosh, look, there he is. He's so tall."

But the next day after watching him win a national title that first evening, we came back the next day and the whispers were getting louder. People were being more bold in what they said to one another. The people around us, coaches were, it turned less from a whisper and then more so into a quiet conversation, but getting louder. And by the end of the meet, people were pretty vocally saying what we all already knew. It wasn't anything profound. Even now, what I say, what I've spent two years of my time saying, until I'm blue in the face, it's nothing profound. It is what we all already know. And that is that men and women we're different and we're different not in a way that makes women inferior. No, we're different in a way that's beautiful, in a way that compliments one another.

And we deserve to be recognized and celebrated and honored based on our own physical ceilings and our own uniqueness. And so that's when I decided that I was no longer willing to wait. And I say wait, because truthfully, that's what I was doing. I was waiting for someone else to say something. I thought a coach, a parent, an official, someone within the NCAA, someone with political power, someone who was supposed to be protecting us would protect us. But it was in that moment on that podium holding the trophy I have to give back, sharing my placement with a man that this realization hit me of Riley, how in the world can you expect someone to stand up for you if you are not even willing to stand up for you? This has to come from you as women, as female athletes.

We have seen remarkable impact and momentum these past two years. Now 25 states have enacted some sort of fairness in Women's Sports Bill. Eight states, hopefully nine soon, have defined the word and codified the word woman in law. We have a sitting supreme court justice who can't even do so, which is the silliest thing ever in her rationale being, "Well, I'm not a biologist." Guess what? I'm not a veterinarian, but I know what a dog is. That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard in my whole entire life. All of that to say, we have seen some radical

and again, severe, harmful attacks from the people who are in the White House right now, abolishing sex-based protections, basically saying, I mean, the message that I've received loud and clear is that we're not worthy. We're not worthy as women, as female athletes. Your daughters, they're not worthy of safety, privacy, protection, equal opportunities, maintaining their dignity. They're not worthy of that.

No. They exist to validate the feelings and the identity of a man. You hear it every single election season where people say, "This is the most important election of our lifetime." And granted, I'm only a young 24 years old and I haven't been overly tuned into politics for much of my life as most 24 year olds are. But what I will say in understanding history, we are at a precipice as a country. There are two options here. One is America first. The other option is America last. One is wanting secure borders. One wants open borders. One ticket knows what a woman is, and the other ticket believes that men can become pregnant. I mean, it sounds insane, but that's reality. That's the platforms, that's the policies that both of these tickets have promised or have already actively put into place. Therefore, it is imperative that we as everyday people, that maybe people who have considered themselves previously apolitical, who haven't voted before, who regardless of any identity factor, really, it is imperative that you get out and vote.

I'm not even going to tell you who to vote for. I believe as a Christian that the option is very clear. Forget conservative values for Christian values. The option is very clear. No one is perfect. No ticket will ever be perfect. But there is one option that will fight to represent as a Christian, I believe, our values, which matters to me, which is why I will be voting in November. And again, why I believe every Christian, a group, a demographic that historically does not get out and vote in the numbers that we should, every single person, every single Christian should get out and vote.

Roger Marsh: Well, those are some rather chilling words from Riley Gaines today here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh in studio with Gary Bauer, our senior Vice President of Public Policy here at the Dobson Policy Center. And Gary, as we were listening to this clip, it's just amazing how far the culture has fallen toward progressivism and even socialism and communism just in the past decade. This is a classic case of that happening.

Gary Bauer: You're exactly right, Roger. And look, when I listened to Riley Gaines, one of the things that jumped out at me was she said, "I kept waiting for the people in charge to take care of this situation. And it suddenly hit me that none of them were going to do it." That they either were afraid or intimidated. And she has said previously that God laid on her heart that as a young Christian woman, she was going to have to stand up and do this herself. God bless her for having that courage. But it brings me, Roger, to what we've been talking about at the James Dobson Family Institute and what Dr. Dobson feels so strongly about, Christian adults need to stand up.

And that's particularly true in a year that's not only a presidential election year, but the whole House of Representatives is being elected, a third of the Senate. And then at the local and state level, there's governors up, state legislatures, school boards, all of these things, all of these elections will decide the status of, among other things, the status of young women and girls in America, whether they will have safe spaces, whether they will have places that they can count on where they have privacy. There was a vote in the House of Representatives on this transgender issue on the question of whether or not the Biden administration ought to back off about trying to force these school districts.

The good guys won the vote. It was 210 to 205. Here's the amazing thing. All 210 votes that voted correctly were Republicans and all 205 votes that said, no, we should have the right to force these school districts to allow boys to go into the girls' restroom, all 205 of those votes were Democrats.

Roger Marsh: Incredible.

Gary Bauer: Now, I grew up in a Democrat home, the party of FDR and JFK and a party with a proud history. But on some of these issues, it's gone off the rails. And so it matters who men and women of faith, it matters who Christians vote for. And we are praying and begging and hoping that there will be a massive turnout on election day of followers of Jesus Christ. Without us, America can't solve its problems.

Roger Marsh: And it's interesting because just about every election cycle, Gary, you've probably said it. I have too. We always talk about how this is the "most important election" in the history of our nation, but now more than ever, take the last 90 seconds or so of our time together and help us understand the gravity of this. I mean, you ran for president. You know what it's like to be in a presidential campaign. You were in the Reagan White House. You were working alongside President Trump in various capacities. You've seen firsthand how quickly this has turned. Help us understand the urgency of why this election is so important.

Gary Bauer: Thank you Roger for asking me that because it's something I feel very strongly about. I've been asking in speeches, audiences to answer the question, what time is it? And people look puzzled. Some people look at their watches. They want to be helpful. What I mean is, do we understand what this moment is in America and what the moment is, it's a time when everything America was built on is up for questioning and up for whether it's going to survive or not. Is this the country the founders intended, a nation built on the idea of order liberty under God, or is this the nation of different strokes for different folks? If it feels good, do it.

That's the road to ruin, and that is what's being debated in this great clash of values in America. Somebody's going to win it, and the winner gets our children and what to teach them about life and death, love and sex, freedom and slavery. So yes, this is perhaps the most consequential election, certainly in

modern American history, I would argue maybe ever in our history. And that's why we have got to stand up, go into the public square and make sure America is still a country that God can and wants to bless.

Roger Marsh:

Well, amen to that, Gary. And as we've mentioned here on the program for most of this month and last month as well, our Countdown to Decision 2024 website is up and it features videos including the entire Riley Gaines presentation. You heard a portion of it here on today's Family Talk broadcast. When you go to drjamesdobson.org/countdown-to-decision-2024, you'll find voter guides, videos and more, and in response to what is being seen as an attack on the ideology that says children are up for grabs basically, as Gary mentioned, Dr. Dobson and the staff here at JDFI's leadership team have put together a public declaration to protect our nation's children. Just an excerpt from this manifesto reads, "As Christians, we adhere to timeless biblical truths supported by biological reality. All children are fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image as male or female. All children suffering from any form of gender related confusion or gender dysphoria deserve compassion, truth, and appropriate mental health care."

And the list goes on from there. Now, you can read the entire statement when you go to our special website, drjamesdobson.org/protect-the-children. And while you're there, you can also sign this document and let your voice be heard that you stand for biblical human sexuality as it pertains to children in particular. So go to drjamesdobson.org/protect-the-children and sign that document today.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh on behalf of Dr. Dobson, Gary Bauer and all of us here at the JDFI. Thanks so much for listening. Be sure to join us again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.