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To: CMECF@ctd.uscourts.gov

Subject: Activity in Case 3:20-cv-00201-RNC Soule et al v. Connecticut Association of Schools, Inc. et al Order on Motion to Transfer/Disqualify/Recuse Judge

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U.S. District Court

District of Connecticut

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Case Name: Soule et al v. Connecticut Association of Schools, Inc. et al

Case Number: [3:20-cv-00201-RNC](#)

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Docket Text:

ORDER denying [103] Motion to Transfer/Disqualify/Recuse Judge. Plaintiffs have moved for my recusal pursuant to 28 U.S.C. s 455(a) because during a telephone conference I informed plaintiffs' counsel that I wanted them to refrain from continuing to refer to the transgender females involved in this case as "males." In calling on plaintiffs' counsel to accept that limitation going forward, I explained that for plaintiffs' counsel to continue to call these transgender youth "males" would be needlessly provocative, and inconsistent with norms of civility in judicial proceedings, which I want to be careful to maintain. As I further explained, for plaintiffs' counsel to refer to these young people as "transgender females" in accordance with their gender identity would entail no concession whatsoever relating to the merits of the case; plaintiffs' counsel would still be able to refer to them as "biologically male" with "male bodies." They just couldn't refer to them as "males, period." Plaintiffs assert that as a result of my statement the public might reasonably believe that I am partial or biased. Plaintiffs have clarified that what troubles them in particular is my statement that for plaintiffs' counsel to refer to the transgender students involved in this case as "transgender

females" rather than "males" would be consistent with "science." Plaintiffs argue that "the public might reasonably conclude that the Court has bias in [this] case where [plaintiffs'] arguments, claims, and expert testimony are based on the assertion that athletes born male remain male as a matter of scientific fact no matter their gender identity, and that as a result those athletes have 'an unfair competitive advantage to competition' in women's and girls' sports." ECF No. 199, at 3-4. I do not agree that the public might reasonably construe my reference to "science" as a comment on the merits of the issue whether transgender athletes have an unfair competitive advantage in girls' sports. In the telephone conference, I stated that referring to the transgender youth involved in this case as "transgender females" would be consistent with "science, common practice, and perhaps human decency." That statement does not reflect a preconceived conclusion on the issue of unfair competitive advantage presented by this case. In fact, and as I think objective members of the public would readily understand, the "science" I referred to is not the science relating to the issue of unfair competitive advantage but the science that tells us calling transgender girls "males" can cause significant mental and emotional distress. The insight provided by this science has led to a "common practice" of referring to transgender persons by their gender identity, which is viewed by many as a matter of "human decency." Thus, as I said, referring to these transgender youth as "transgender females" would be consistent with "science, common practice, and perhaps human decency." By referring to science in this way, in this context, and for this purpose, I did not state or imply anything about whether the transgender youth in this case do or do not enjoy an unfair competitive advantage when they compete in girls' track. To the extent plaintiffs' counsel argue that they must be able to refer to the transgender girls in this case as "males, period" in order to fulfill their responsibilities as zealous advocates, and that they have an absolute Constitutional right to do so, the argument is unpersuasive. The issue of unfair competitive advantage can be fully and fairly litigated consistent with professional ethics and constitutional protections without referring to the transgender females involved in this case as "males, period." I think objective members of the public would agree. I also think objective members of the public would understand that just because I want plaintiffs' counsel to avoid needlessly calling the transgender females in this case "males, period" does not mean I am partial or biased with regard to any issue in the case. Accordingly, the motion is hereby denied. Signed by Judge Robert N. Chatigny on 6/16/20. (Chatigny, Robert)