

Georgia lawmakers approve divisive concepts, transgender sports bill



Credit: Branden Camp

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Gov. Brian Kemp after speaking on Sine Die, the last day of the General Assembly at the Georgia State Capitol in Atlanta on Monday, April 4, 2022. Branden Camp/ For The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The Georgia General Assembly just after midnight Monday approved legislation to control how race is discussed in K-12 classrooms, after amending it to allow any athletic association to ban transgender girls from competing with girls' teams.

[House Bill 1084](#) had already passed the state Senate on Friday with minor amendments after approval in the House. Then, it got tossed back and forth for final approval, and the transgender measure was added. It now goes to the desk of Gov. Brian Kemp.

The divisive concepts portion of the legislation prohibits the teaching of nine concepts that Rep. [Will Wade](#), R-Dawsonville, defines as divisive. The concepts mirror almost line for line a September 2020 [executive order](#) by then-President Donald Trump banning them from federal worker training. Explore [Georgia Senate approves bill to limit classroom race discussions](#)

They involve generalizations, like saying one race is inherently superior, moral character is racially determined or America is fundamentally racist.

The bill would establish a process to vet parents' allegations that one or more of the concepts were taught.

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Kemp said during his [State of the State address](#) in January that he would work with lawmakers to stop the “divisive ideology” of critical race theory in schools. The academic theory is taught in college courses to explore the influence of racism on institutions and society. Georgia school districts say it isn’t taught in K-12 classrooms.

On Monday, Kemp spoke from the House floor again, saying he was “looking forward to continuing the critically important conversation” on bills yet to pass that evening, including “on fairness in school sports” and “divisive concepts.”

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The bill was amended on the House floor Monday to create a school athletics oversight committee that would study and determine if transgender students should be allowed to participate in public high school sports that align with their gender identity.

A bill that passed the Senate but did not get a hearing in the House would have outright required student athletes to play sports according to the gender on their birth certificate.

House Democratic Leader James Beverly of Macon decried the last minute maneuvering. “To target trans kids, to ban kids from playing sports, and to attack teachers at the same time — appalling,” he said.

Senate Democrats tried and failed to kill the legislation. After the clock ticked past midnight, the Senate approved the amended bill on a party line vote of 32-21, with Republicans voting in favor of the measure.