



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 2, 2025

UPenn Revokes “Lia” Thomas’ Swimming Records Under Agreement With Education Department

Striking another blow for sanity (though not constitutionality), the federal Education Department has dunked the University of Pennsylvania in the deep end of the swimming pool.

In a deal announced with the department yesterday to avoid the loss of federal funding, the university has revoked the victories and records racked up by William Thomas. He swam for the school’s women’s swim team under the name “Lia.” At stake was almost \$1 billion in tax subsidies.

The university will also apologize to the women athletes whose victories were stolen by Thomas’ legalized cheating.



Riley Gaines/X
William "Lia" Thomas (left) and Riley Gaines

UPenn has agreed to right its wrongs, restore records to the rightful female athletes, and issue an apology to the women impacted by the man they allowed to compete as a woman.

Are pigs flying?

God bless [@realDonaldTrump](#). pic.twitter.com/PZxcieyp7m

— Riley Gaines (@Riley_Gaines_) [July 1, 2025](#)

Executive Orders

Thomas, 6 feet, 4 inches tall and weighing an estimated 175 pounds, claimed he was a woman his freshman year at Penn, in 2018. He won the NCAA Division I women’s title in the 500-yard freestyle in 2022, and posted several other “records.” [Thomas held](#) swimming records in the 100-, 200-, and 500-yard freestyle.

Real women, naturally, were aghast at the big lug’s taking their prizes. They campaigned to stop men from taking over women’s sports.

During his presidential campaign, President Donald Trump vowed to end the cheating. On January 20, he signed “[Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government](#),” which defined men as men and women as women.

There followed “[Keeping Men Out of Women’s Sports](#)” on February 5. Citing Title IX, the federal statute that forbids sex discrimination in education, Trump ordered an end to all federal funding for universities that permit men to enter women’s sports. The cheating would end.

“It is the policy of the United States to rescind all funds from educational programs that deprive women



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and girls of fair athletic opportunities, which results in the endangerment, humiliation, and silencing of women and girls and deprives them of privacy,” Trump wrote:

It shall also be the policy of the United States to oppose male competitive participation in women’s sports more broadly, as a matter of safety, fairness, dignity, and truth.

In April, the Education Department’s civil rights office found that Penn had violated Title IX.

[According to Craig Trainor](#), the office’s acting assistant secretary:

UPenn has a choice to make: do the right thing for its female students and come into full compliance with Title IX immediately or continue to advance an extremist political project that violates federal antidiscrimination law and puts UPenn’s federal funding at risk.

The office proposed a settlement with several conditions.

Penn apparently valued the money more than Thomas’ records.

Settlement

The resolution agreement that Penn signed requires the follow actions, the [department said](#):

- “All individual UPenn Division I swimming records, titles, or similar recognitions which were misappropriated by male athletes allowed to compete in female categories” will be restored to women;
- A statement from UPenn to the “university community” will vow compliance with Title IX, “specifying that UPenn will not allow males to compete in female athletic programs or occupy Penn Athletics female intimate facilities”;
- The statement — to be posted at a “prominent location on its main website and on each of its websites for women’s athletics” — will say that the university “will adopt biology-based definitions for the words ‘male’ and ‘female’ pursuant to Title IX and consistent with” Trump’s two executive orders.
- Penn will also rescind any guidance or statements that violate or are inconsistent with Title IX and notify staffers and women’s athletics; and,
- The university will “send a personalized letter of apology to each impacted female swimmer.”

The deal will protect Penn’s hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies. Since fiscal 2021, the school has received more than \$800 million annually. Last year, [it pulled down](#) \$867.1 million. So far this year, [it has received](#) \$383.5 million.



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TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, THE

Also known by 37 other names ▶

Overview

PARENT RECIPIENT [View child recipients ▶](#)

Total Awarded Amount
\$383.5 Million
from 1,894 transactions

Details

Recipient Identifier

TRUSTEES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, THE

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Overview

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Total Awarded Amount
\$867.1 Million
from 3,601 transactions

Details

Recipient Identifier

[Said Education Secretary Linda McMahon.](#)

Today is a great victory for women and girls not only at the University of Pennsylvania, but all across our nation. The Department commends UPenn for rectifying its past harms against women and girls, and we will continue to fight relentlessly to restore Title IX’s proper application and enforce it to the fullest extent of the law.

Female Swimmers Respond

Paula Scanlan, who swam for the university, was one of the women “who had to compete against and share a locker room with a male athlete,” she said. She and women on her team were “offered psychological services to attempt to re-educate us to become comfortable with the idea of undressing in front of a male,” [she testified](#) to Congress in 2023.

[She noted](#) regarding yesterday’s resolution agreement:



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Today marks a momentous step in repairing the past mistreatment of female athletes, and forging a future where sex discrimination plays no role in limiting girls' potential.

Riley Gaines, who swam for the University of Kentucky, is equally pleased. She said:

It is my hope that today demonstrates to educational institutions that they will no longer be allowed to trample upon women's civil rights, and renews hope in every female athlete that their country's highest leadership will not relent until they have the dignity, safety, and fairness they deserve.

Banned Last Year

[In December](#), World Aquatics banned Thomas from swimming in women's events in the Olympics and other elite competitions. The Lavender Lobby fumed. "World Aquatics continues to spread disinformation about transgender people as a distorted way to 'protect women,'" fumed Kate Ellis, headmistress of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. "Transgender women are women and all athletes who want to play and follow the rules should have a chance to do so."

Gaines begged to differ, writing on X:.

Great news! Lia Thomas won't be able to compete in [the] women's category at the Olympics or any other elite competition.

He has just lost his legal battle in the Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling.

This is a victory for women and girls everywhere.

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He has just lost his legal battle in Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling.

This is a victory for women and girls everywhere <https://t.co/fEZc47K0FA>

— Riley Gaines (@Riley_Gaines_) [June 12, 2024](#)

Gaines comes by her disdain for Thomas' honestly. When she tied the hulking bruiser for fifth in 2022's NCAA Division I final in the 200-meter freestyle, officials gave Thomas the trophy. An official told Gaines:

We only have one fifth-place trophy, so yours will be coming in the mail. We went ahead and gave the fifth place trophy to Lia, but you can pose on the podium with the sixth place trophy.

Gaines wasn't angry just about that. The women in the event were not told that Thomas would be in their locker room. They were not enthused, to say the least.



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