

## US Chess Transgender Policy

Original policy announcement and rationale.

At their quarterly meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, the US Chess Federation's Executive Board adopted the following transgender policy on May 20, 2018, by a unanimous vote of 7-0:

"The Executive Board moves to adopt the following transgender policy as provided by legal counsel: Allow a person to identify as they choose, and allow each person one change to their gender identification. If an individual attempts a second change to gender identification, at that time the individual must provide US Chess a birth certificate, and the birth gender indicated on the birth certificate will be used to determine gender for US Chess purposes. A request to change gender must be done at least two weeks prior to participating in a US Chess rated event. US Chess policy is subservient to applicable laws."

This policy:

- was developed in consultation with US Chess corporate counsel;
- codifies current US Chess practices about self-identification;
- recognizes that there is a complicated, evolving legal landscape in which state and federal laws are often at odds.

The new US Chess policy reflects a middle ground position that will allow for players to affiliate with US Chess regardless of gender identification.

As the US Chess mission statement is: **empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess**, the organization acted to be both inclusive and in alignment with best practices. Further, one of our core values is customer service, within which we strive to be responsive, adaptive, and proactive in providing services to our customers.

Since US Chess records are sometimes inaccurate in certain data fields because many memberships are initially taken through affiliates, incomplete or incorrect gender data that is updated does not count toward an official change relative to this policy.

Our research on other organizations that have adopted similar policies clearly shows that instances of individuals who will abuse or 'game the system' are exceedingly rare. But most importantly, this new policy speaks to another of US Chess' core values, accessibility: Chess can and should be enjoyed by individuals regardless of social or economic status or physical or developmental capability.

## FAQs

### *Why did US Chess adopt a transgender policy?*

Like all communities, US Chess attracts a wide range of people who represent the broader population. US Chess has individual members who identify as transgender and has had such members for some time. Recent changes to various state laws, changing attitudes and social norms, and inquiries from our community all led to the Executive Board's adoption of the policy.

### *What is the intent of the US Chess transgender policy?*

US Chess is committed to providing opportunities for everyone to play chess regardless of their race, ethnic or national origin, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. US Chess will recognize an individual's gender identity that is consistent with the identity they maintain in their non-chess life (e.g. family, social, professional). Changing a gender simply to compete in a special section or single gender event is against the intent and spirit of this policy. "Gaming the system" will not be tolerated and the member could be subject to US Chess ethics sanctions.

### *Can I show up at an event and request a change in gender on my US Chess membership record?*

Given the sensitive and personal nature of these requests, US Chess requires individuals who seek a gender change in their US Chess membership record to call the office's membership department at [314.661.9500](tel:314.661.9500), ext. 1 to make that change in advance of an event. If it is the first change, your request will be honored by phone. If a subsequent change is requested, a conforming birth certificate will be required.

### *What will be the effect on women's sections or women's tournaments?*

US Chess will continue to support and encourage women's only sections and tournaments.

### *What does this mean for the US Chess Mission?*

US Chess will continue to empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess. This policy is firmly rooted within our mission.

*Original Policy Adopted: May 25, 2018*

*Revised Policy Adopted: March 5, 2019*

*Revised August 18, 2023 with updated US*

*Chess phone number and mission statement.*