



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 5, 2021

CONTACT:

Bill Maertz, bmaertz@cityofsanteeca.gov, 619-258-4100

Kim Turner, kturner@legalaidatwork.org, 415-593-0054

Amy Poyer, amy.poyer@cwlc.org, 323-951-1041

Civil Rights Nonprofit Organizations and City of Santee Work to Ensure Gender-Based Athletic Equity in Community Sports

Agreement to Instill a Level Playing Field for City's Girls

Santee (August 5, 2021) – The City of Santee, California (“Santee” or “City”), Legal Aid At Work’s Fair Play for Girls in Sports Project (“Legal Aid”) and the California Women’s Law Center (“CWLC”) have entered into an agreement to ensure the City complies with AB 2404, California Government Code Section 53080 (“AB 2404” or the “Fair Play in Community Sports Act”), which generally requires gender equity in community youth athletic programming. .

AB 2404 mandates gender equity in competitive youth sports run or hosted by public agencies, including parks and recreation districts, throughout the state. The law has long required equity in opportunity—affording girls athletic slots proportional to their community representation and interests as well as gender equity in the treatment and benefits provided through publicly-supported youth sports.

We are proud to announce that Santee, Legal Aid, and CWLC have successfully developed a plan to provide AB 2404 compliance in Santee. The agreement will ensure the City provides and maintains equal athletic opportunities, treatment, and benefits for female youth in Santee. Among other items, the City will make softball-oriented improvements to facilities, including the construction of two new softball fields, to ensure greater equity between the softball and baseball programs. The agreement also requires the City to collect data on participation levels

in youth competitive sports that are run or facilitated in any way by the City to ensure all Santee youth have an equal opportunity to play.

The City will keep track of all the steps it takes to assess its programs and promote gender equity and fair play, including with respect to funding, equipment, scheduling games and practice times, opportunities to receive coaching and the assignment and compensation of the coaches, access to locations and facilities for games and practices, seasonal sport selection, locker rooms, publicity, and officiation by qualified and certified umpires, referees, or judges.

This resolution represents a collaborative agreement that will help level the playing field in youth community-based athletics by providing equal athletic opportunities, treatment, and benefits for youth female athletes in the City of Santee.

Kim Turner, senior staff attorney at Legal Aid and director of Fair Play for Girls in Sports explained, “Not only is AB 2404 the law, ensuring gender equity in community-based, publicly-facilitated youth sports is the right thing to do. In addition to the health benefits of athletics, girls who play sports excel academically, and in the workplace as adults. Our California communities must heed and respond to AB 2404 to instill a level playing field for girls of our cities, towns, and counties that want to get out and play in local sports programming and experience a level playing field.”

“We are pleased that the City of Santee has agreed to take the necessary steps under the law to ensure young girls have the same opportunity to play youth community sports as boys, and that they are treated equally,” said Amy Poyer, senior staff attorney at CWLC. “This agreement shows that cities throughout the state can and must prioritize providing an equal athletic environment in their programming to their young girls and boys alike.”

The City of Santee takes great pride in the high-quality facilities it offers the public. Female athletes from throughout the southwest are familiar with Santee due to participation in regional tournaments hosted at City ballfields. Although the City does not organize or administer sports leagues, the City works hard to ensure that access to City facilities is equitable and will continue to employ innovative strategies to maximize use of its popular parks and fields.

California Women’s Law Center

The [California Women’s Law Center](http://www.cwlc.org) (CWLC) is a non-profit law and policy center whose mission is to create a more just and equitable society by breaking down barriers and advancing the potential of women and girls through impact litigation, policy advocacy and education. CWLC serves as an expert resource for girls, parents, coaches, administrators, and policy makers who want to ensure girls get their fair chance to play. We overwhelmingly focus our efforts on assisting low-income women and girls and communities of color. More information about CWLC’s work can be found at www.cwlc.org.

Legal Aid at Work

[Legal Aid at Work](#) is a nonprofit legal services organization that has been assisting low-income, working families for more than 100 years. Its programs conduct outreach, provide direct legal services to thousands of people each year, engage in litigation, and advocate for policies that strengthen the rights of low-income people. More information about Legal Aid at Work can be found at www.legalaidatwork.org.

LAAW's [Fair Play for Girls in Sports](#) project spurs schools and parks and recreation departments to treat girls equally on and off the field. Focusing particularly on girls of color and girls who live in low-income communities, this work promotes the health, educational achievement, and future employment opportunities of girls in grades K-12. More information about Fair Play for Girls in Sports can be found at www.fairplayforgirlsinsports.org.