

Conservative group releases anti-transgender political ads in Michigan

American Principles Project announced that it will spend millions in battleground states to expose Democrats' "transgender radicalism."

Sept. 4, 2020, 1:12 PM EDT

By Brooke Sopelsa

"All female athletes want is a fair shot at competition," a young woman can be heard saying over a video of several athletes preparing to run a race. "But what if that shot was taken away by a competitor who claims to be a girl but was born a boy?"

That [controversial digital ad](#) — which then shows a teen boy outrunning his female competitors and shrugging at them with indifference afterwards — is one of three released this week by the American Principles Project, a Virginia-based conservative think tank, and its PAC. The group issued a [statement](#) Thursday saying the political ads are part of a \$4 million effort to "target persuadable Democrats and independent voters in key swing states."

Half of the campaign budget will be spent in Michigan, a state Trump won in 2016 but now [lags in the polls](#), and the American Principles Project confirmed it will release ads in Wisconsin "in the coming weeks." The group said it hopes the Michigan ads draw attention to the support of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., "for policies which would allow biological males to compete in women's sports and push children into dangerous, life-altering sex-change" procedures.

The two other ads feature Kevin Whitt, a man who says he lived as a woman for 17 years before deciding to detransition. Whitt [warns viewers](#) that "treatments to change the gender of a minor are very dangerous and irreversible."

The Biden and Peters campaigns did not immediately respond to a requests for comment.

National LGBTQ advocacy groups, including the Human Rights Campaign and GLAAD, were quick to denounce the campaign.

"These ads perpetuate dangerous stereotypes, traffic in misinformation, and put the lives of transgender people at risk," GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis said in a statement. "Sites and social media platforms like YouTube and Facebook should decline to run them and send a message loud and clear that those who would use their platforms to peddle hate and lies will not be tolerated or validated."

The Human Rights Campaign also called for social media companies to take down the digital ads, saying they are blatant lies from an "outdated playbook."

"APP wants a future where LGBTQ people can be fired, denied housing, refused business services or health care solely because of who they are. But they know full well that they're on the wrong side of this issue and the wrong side of our future."

Representatives from Facebook and YouTube did not immediately respond to NBC News' requests for comment regarding the ads.

This is not the first time APP has funded an ad campaign with the hopes of making transgender rights a

political wedge issue. Last year, it [funded a similar campaign amid the Kentucky](#) governor's race, though the group's preferred candidate, Republican Gov. Matt Bevin, lost to Democrat Andy Beshear.