

GAVIN GRIMM

b. May 4, 1999

TEEN TRANSGENDER ACTIVIST

“I’m just Gavin. I have frustrations, stress, hopes, and dreams like millions of other young people in America. And like everyone else, sometimes I have to use the restroom. It’s not political. It’s just life.”

He sued for the right to use the boys’ restroom in his Virginia public high school.

Gavin Grimm was thrust into the national spotlight in 2014 as a transgender high school student, when he sued for the right to use the boys’ restroom in his Virginia public high school.

Born female, Grimm struggled with his sexual identity from an early age. At 15 he was diagnosed with severe gender dysphoria and began medical treatment. With his high school’s permission, he began using the boys’ restroom in his sophomore year. He told The Washington Post, “It just seemed like the natural progression of things.”

Grimm used the boys’ restroom without issue for nearly two months. Then, following transphobic complaints from parents and residents, the high school and the Gloucester

County School Board voted to ban Grimm from using the bathroom matching his gender identity.

At a subsequent school board meeting, Grimm endured insults, threats and inflammatory rhetoric. The board voted to segregate him by relegating his bathroom use to the nurse’s restroom or to a makeshift restroom meant only for him.

After learning of Grimm’s plight, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a federal lawsuit on his behalf, contending that the school board’s restriction of his bathroom use was unconstitutional. They argued that the school’s policy violated Title IX laws prohibiting sex discrimination under the U.S. Education Amendments of 1972.

The lower courts dismissed the case. In 2016 the U.S. Court of Appeals overturned the lower courts’ decision in Grimm’s favor. The Gloucester County School Board then petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to review the case. The request was rejected.

Throughout the appeals and during his graduation from Gloucester High School in June 2017, Grimm remained barred from the boys’ restroom. In 2018 the U.S. District Court declared that the school violated the rights of transgender students by excluding them from the bathroom matching their gender identity.

Grimm has received numerous awards. In 2017 TIME magazine honored him on its list of “100 Most Influential People.” Major news outlets, including as The New York Times and The Washington Post, have reported his story.

Grimm is working toward his college degree and advocates for transgender equality.



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