



## **Campaign to Sanction High School Girls Wrestling in Pennsylvania Launches**

**Harrisburg, PA (March 4, 2020)** – The Pennsylvania Girls High School Wrestling Task Force announces the launch of SanctionPA, a grassroots effort to work towards getting high school girls wrestling approved as a sanctioned sport in Pennsylvania. The SanctionPA campaign includes advocacy efforts, education resources, promotional materials and collaboration with schools.

For the past five years, girls wrestling has been the fastest growing high school sport in the country. Mirroring the national statistics, Pennsylvania high school wrestling has experienced a 100% growth of girls on high school boys' teams in the past five years. All 12 PIAA district areas have girls wrestling within their area schools. While there are 21 state high school associations sanctioning a girls wrestling state championship, Pennsylvania does not yet have an official state tournament and has not sanctioned girls wrestling as a sport.

The Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) current rules require a minimum of 100 schools to have officially recognized girls wrestling programs before considering sanctioning the sport. The SanctionPA campaign is working to provide educational information and resources to help grow opportunities for girls wrestling and help to promote the addition of school girls wrestling programs.

### **Activities of the SanctionPA campaign include:**

- Educate wrestling coaches and school administrators on girls wrestling;
- Work with individual schools to form official high school girls wrestling teams;
- Provide resources to schools and coaches to develop girls teams;
- Work with the PIAA Wrestling Steering committee and state office on sanctioning efforts and the creation of a PIAA State Championship;
- Help coordinate competition opportunities for girls until sanctioning is achieved;

### **Quotes:**

“We are at a critical tipping point for girls wrestling in the state of Pennsylvania as we see the interest for the sport gaining momentum. Girls wrestling is the fastest growing high school sport in the nation and our state is seeing the same increase in popularity. Now is the time to embrace girls wrestling in Pennsylvania, a state that prides ourselves on our strong history of wrestling.” - - **Brooke Zumas, assistant wrestling coach, Parkland High School and chair, Pennsylvania Girls High School Wrestling Task Force**

“The amazing thing about wrestling is it is an inclusive sport, as it provides opportunity for individuals from all backgrounds and all physical sizes. However, in Pennsylvania that inclusion has historically stopped at gender. We are now seeing a hardy appetite to be fully inclusive and put out the welcome mat at a wide-open door for girl wrestlers.” - - **Joe Stabilito, chairman, Pennsylvania USA Wrestling**

“Officially recognizing the sport by schools and the state athletic association makes a huge impact on the growth of girls wrestling in that state. Data shows that girls would prefer to wrestle and compete against girls. In those states that recently added an official state-association sanctioned girls state championship have seen growth as high as 400% following sanctioning, and every sanctioned state saw a marked increase in their female wrestling participation numbers.” - - **Sally Roberts, founder and CEO, Wrestle Like A Girl**

“Sanctioning girls wrestling in Pennsylvania will help to grow the teams to give more girls chances to experience wrestling and it will give me more opportunities to succeed in the sport that I love. I want the opportunity to be a PIAA Girls State Champion.” - - **Mackenna Atkinson, wrestler, Souderton Wrestling**

#### **About The Pennsylvania Girls High School Wrestling Task Force**

The Pennsylvania Girls High School Wrestling Task Force is comprised of wrestling leaders in the state of Pennsylvania. Additionally, the task force is supported by local and national organizations, including Wrestle Like a Girl, Pennsylvania USA Wrestling, National Wrestling Coaches Association, PA Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame, National High School Coaches Association, and Pennsylvania Wrestling Coaches Association. Learn more about the SanctionPA campaign at [SanctionPA.com](http://SanctionPA.com).

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