

May 21, 2003

Dear Representative/Senator,

We, the undersigned education, women's rights, civil rights, good government, and advocacy organizations, are writing to urge you to support current Title IX athletics policies and to ask you to join us in urging the President and Secretary Rod Paige to reject any changes to those policies.

As part of our nation's civil rights enforcement scheme, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 bars sex discrimination in education programs or activities that receive federal funding, including athletics programs. As you know, the Commission on Opportunity in Athletics provided its final report regarding Title IX athletics policies to Secretary Paige on February 26, 2003. The report contains recommendations that could devastate the current Title IX athletics policies, reducing the athletic opportunities and scholarship dollars to which women and girls are legally entitled.

Unfortunately, Title IX, and its three-part test for ensuring equal athletics participation opportunities, have been wrongly blamed for cuts to some men's sports teams at some educational institutions. However, the three-part test provides maximum flexibility to schools and the facts demonstrate that most educational institutions comply with Title IX's mandate to provide equal athletics participation opportunities by expanding opportunities for the underrepresented gender, or by demonstrating that they have fully accommodated the interests and abilities of the underrepresented gender. Further, schools choose to support, eliminate, or reduce particular sports opportunities for both men's and women's specific teams for a variety of reasons, including varying interests in specific sports, and choices about how to allocate budget resources among the sports teams.

Thirty years after enactment of Title IX, female athletes today continue to face persistent discrimination at both the high school and college level. Although male and female participation in athletics has grown steadily, female student-athletes continue to receive far fewer participation opportunities, scholarships, and operating and recruitment budgets. For example, although women in Division I colleges are 53 percent of the student body, they receive only 41 percent of the opportunities to play sports, 36 percent of overall athletic operating budgets, and 32 percent of the dollars spent to recruit new athletes. Thus, we have not yet reached Title IX's goal of gender equity.

We believe that:

- No changes to the Title IX athletics enforcement policies are warranted or necessary; the three-part test, including its proportionality prong, is an appropriate and necessary means to implement Title IX's requirement of equality.
- The current Title IX standards must be vigorously enforced by the federal government at every level of education to ensure equal opportunity.
- Title IX policies must not be weakened because of financial choices educational institutions make to emphasize selected sports programs, reduce the size of some sports programs, or in other ways determine the size and expense of athletics programs.

The public overwhelmingly supports the existing Title IX standards. A USA Today/CNN poll done in January 2003 found that seven of ten adults familiar with Title IX think the law should be strengthened or left alone. Indeed, the current policies have been in place through Republican and Democratic administrations and have been uniformly upheld by all eight of the federal appeals courts that have considered them. We urge you to contact President Bush and Secretary Paige and ask them to reject any proposed changes to Title IX athletics policies.

Sincerely,

American Association for Active Lifestyles and Fitness
American Association for Health Education
American Association for Leisure and Recreation
American Association of University Women
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
Americans for Democratic Action
Association for Gender Equity Leadership in Education
Association for Women in Science
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Business and Professional Women/USA
Campaign for America's Future
California Women's Law Center
Center for Research on Women and Gender, University of Illinois at Chicago
Center for Women Policy Studies
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Choice USA
Church Women United
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coalition of Labor Union Women
Common Cause
Council for Exceptional Children
Dads and Daughters
Federally Employed Women
Feminist Majority
Florida Women's Consortium
GenderWatchers
General Federation of Women's Clubs
Girls Incorporated
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
Hmong National Development
Human Rights Campaign

Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport of the University of Central Florida
Japanese Americans Citizen's League
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
League of Fans
League of Women Voters of the US
Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission (Nebraska)
McAuley Institute
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Ms. Foundation for Women
Myra Sadker Advocates
NAACP
NA'AMAT USA
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
National Association for Sport and Physical Education
National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators
National Association of Commissions for Women
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
National Association for Girls and Women in Sport
National Association for Physical Education in Higher Education (NAPEHE)
National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education
National Collaboration for Youth
National Congress of Black Women
National Consortium for Academics and Sport
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of LaRaza
National Council of Negro Women
National Council of Women's Organizations
National Education Association
National Initiative for Women in Higher Education
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women and Families
National PTA
National Women's Conference Committee
National Women's Law Center
Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society
NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund
Organization of Chinese Americans
OWL, the voice of midlife and older women
People For the American Way
Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office

Pride at Work, AFL-CIO
Rainbow Push Coalition
Service Employees International Union
The Sikh Coalition
Sisters Supporting Sisters, Inc.
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Union of American Hebrew Congregations
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
United States Student Association
The Western Society for Physical Education of College Women
The White House Project
Woman Activist Fund
Women Employed
Women & Philanthropy
Women & Politics Institute
Women's Business Development Center
Women's Caucus for Political Science
Women's Information Network
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press
Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA)
Women's Research and Education Institute
Women's Sports Foundation
Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA)
Women Work!
YWCA of the USA