

Hold High Schools Accountable for Enforcing Title IX

January 31, 2008



Dear Representative:

On behalf of the more than 100,000 bipartisan members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), we encourage you to cosponsor the **High School Athletics Accountability Act (H.R. 901)**, introduced by Representatives Louise McIntosh Slaughter (D-NY) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV). This legislation would require that high schools report basic data on the number of female and male students participating in their athletic programs and the expenditures made for their sports teams. Schools already collect the data required under this legislation. However, currently this data is not publicly available. This bill would make information regarding the number of female and male athletes and the expenditures made on their teams available to the public. With the 35th anniversary of Title IX this past year, now is the time to hold high schools accountable for enforcing Title IX.

The importance of reporting data related to athletics gets at the heart of Title IX enforcement. Women are now actively participating in collegiate sports in large part due the requirements of accountability provided under the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act of 1994, requiring colleges and universities to account for how their athletics opportunities, resources, and dollars were allocated among male and female athletes. This reporting requirement accounts, in large part, for the narrowing of the athletics gap at the college level. While women's athletics continue to lag behind men both in opportunities to participate and in dollars spent, women's athletic participation has increased by 403% since 1971, proving that interest follows opportunity.

It has been a significant drawback to Title IX enforcement that no such accountability requirement exists at the high school level. The Department of Education has not set forth regulations to guide the enforcement of Title IX in high schools, and these schools are not required to report opportunity and funding statistics to any higher authority. As a result, high school girls are being deprived of the critical opportunity to play sports. In fact, while girls comprise 49% of the high school population, they receive only 41% of all athletic participation opportunities – 1.3 million fewer participation opportunities than male high school athletes.¹ Statistics have shown that teenage female athletes are less likely to smoke, to use marijuana, alcohol, cocaine, or other illicit drugs; they are also less likely to be suicidal, and are more likely to have a positive body image than female non-athletes.

The benefits girls receive from participating in sports can lead to success in all aspects of life. By cosponsoring the **High School Athletics Accountability Act (H.R. 901)**, you would be taking the first step to ensure that future generations of girls will be afforded the opportunities that all athletes deserve. If you have any further questions, feel free to contact me at 202-785-7720, or Tracy Sherman, government relations manager, at 202-785-7730. Votes associated with these issues may be included in the AAUW Congressional Voting Record for the 110th Congress.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Maatz
Director of Public Policy and Government Relations

¹ 2005-05 *High School Athletics Participation Survey*, (Indianapolis, IN: National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), 2006).