



## INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S FORUM

### Get the Facts: Title IX & Athletics

Title IX was created to outlaw sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funds. However, through skewed interpretation of this statute, feminist groups have used Title IX to push a radical agenda in schools. Consequently, current Title IX enforcement has institutionalized discrimination against men and demeaned legitimate athletic and academic accomplishments of women.

#### What is Title IX?

In 1972, Title IX was passed as an education amendment. It was written to outlaw sex discrimination in schools. While Title IX applies to all educational programs, its impact on athletic programs has been the most pronounced. Though Congress specifically stated the intent of Title IX was not to establish gender quotas, that has been the effect in the athletic arena and schools have often cut men's athletics in an attempt to comply with Title IX.

The pressure to cut programs comes from Title IX's proportionality requirement, which requires a school's athletic gender breakdown to match the gender breakdown of the general student body. For example, if 60% of the student body is female, 60% of the athletes must also be female to meet Title IX's proportionality test—the only requirement with a clear, quantitative test that can shield schools from litigation. With female students making up an increasingly large percentage of the undergraduate population, schools are struggling to achieve proportionality. The only options are to add programs for women or cut them for men. Once other concerns, like the budget, are taken into account, cutting programs is the easiest road to take.

Supporters of Title IX claim that schools can create opportunities for women without cutting men's opportunities, but the evidence shows otherwise. In spring 2007, a study by the College Sports Council (CSC) found:

- From 1981 to 2005, the number of male athletes per school declined 6% and men's teams dropped 17%. In the same timeframe, female athletes per school rose 34% and women's teams rose 34%.
- Men's tennis, wrestling, and gymnastics have faced the most cuts. For example, men's gymnastics has less than 20 varsity programs left in the country.

#### The Solution:

The common sense alternative to proportionality's one-size-fits-all gender quota is to measure student interest and abilities. This approach would offer schools more flexibility in catering to the preferences of the student body. It is also important in this approach to measure the interests and abilities of both men and women. Under current Title IX requirements, schools are only responsible for meeting the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex. Schools should be held accountable to all of their students, not just women.

It is important to celebrate the advances women have made in the athletic arena. However, it is equally important not to discriminate or punish men by replacing one form of discrimination for another. The proportionality rule of Title IX is long overdue for a reform.

All facts taken from *Title IX & Athletics: A Primer*, a publication by the Independent Women's Forum, available at [iwf.org](http://iwf.org)