

Title IX Roundtable

Cady Mullens
Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Hello and thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my daughter's story with you. It is a privilege to be in Washington speaking to members of the Senate. Thank you Senator Tuberville, for organizing this conversation about the importance of Title IX.

My name is Cady Mullens and I am the mother of a college athlete. My daughter Lily is a member of the Swim Team at Roanoke College in Virginia. It has been difficult for our daughter and our entire family, as we have watched the hard work Lily put into swimming be compromised and her dreams turned to nightmares.

For me, this nightmare began last summer when as a captain on the Roanoke College Swim Team, my daughter was making nameplates for the girls. She made one for someone who used to be on the men's team, but now on the women's team.

We have all become too familiar with men competing unfairly and unjustly in women's sports. Women are put at risk and robbed of opportunities when this happens, But still, it continues. It happened to my daughter and her teammates.

Our girls were told not to speak up. They were told they would be labeled and face academic and professional repercussions. They were told if they didn't like it they could leave.

My daughter and her teammates began to ask whether college swimming was worth it. They were acutely aware of the unfairness and did not want to participate in a fraud.

Lil loved Roanoke.

So I understood how bad it was for her when she told me "I hate being here! I don't want to have to look at an intact man in a girls suit at practice, I don't want to walk out onto a pool deck and have other teams look at me as if I support this lie; I don't think I can do it!"

She wasn't alone.

To think that having a man on the women's team does not affect our young women, is to

ignore the ugly truth. The hell that these girls went through has affected them dramatically. My daughter was so upset and so nervous that she became physically ill. So violently ill that the contents of her stomach didn't just come from her mouth, but out her nose and hit the back of the bathroom wall. That is the level of aggressive, emotional, physical turmoil that this took on her.

I barely recognized my daughter as she went through this abuse. She lost noticeable amounts of weight. Her posture had changed.

This was not the kid that I sent to Roanoke College.

This was a defeated young lady, who had something stolen from her. Her passion for a sport that she loved was eviscerated. The helplessness was crushing. The injustice occupied every thought and every free moment.

I hear a lot of discussion surrounding the mental wellbeing and acceptance of transgender athletes. For every one male athlete competing against women there are countless women affected.