



June 20, 2019

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the over 170,000 members and supporters of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I urge you to support Title IX by becoming an original cosponsor of the Patsy T. Mink and Louise M. Slaughter Gender Equity in Education Act (GEEA) of 2019. In the 47 years since Congress passed Title IX, women and girls have made significant strides in education. Despite these achievements, barriers to equity in education still exist. This Sunday, June 23, 2019, marks the 47th anniversary of Title IX and more progress is needed to fulfill its promise. I urge you to become an original cosponsor GEEA and support women and girls' equal access to education.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. It covers women and men, girls and boys, and staff and students in any educational institution or program that receives federal funds. Title IX requires recipients of federal education funding to evaluate their current policies and practices, adopt and publish a policy against sex discrimination, and implement grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee discrimination complaints. This vital law affects all areas of education, including: recruitment, admissions and housing; pregnant, and parenting students; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); sexual harassment and assault; and athletics.

Despite tremendous progress, women and girls still face challenges to fully and equally access education. AAUW research found that 56 percent of girls and 40 percent of boys in grades 7-12 face sexual harassment. Of that number, 87 percent said it had a negative effect on them.¹ Women's advancement in high-demand, high-wage fields of study, including computer science and engineering, has stagnated or even declined in recent years.² Pregnant and parenting students are frequently subjected to unlawful policies and practices that deter them from completing their education.³ Girls have 1.15 million fewer opportunities to play sports in high school than boys.⁴ Moreover, when it comes to girls of color and chances to play school sports, the disparity is even starker. They receive far fewer opportunities than white boys, boys of color, and white girls.⁵ These and other instances of discrimination affect the ability of all students to stay in school and to get the most out of their educations. When they do not have equal opportunities in schools, our country is limited in its ability to produce skilled workers prepared for an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

To tackle sex discrimination in all areas of education, the Patsy T. Mink and Louise M. Slaughter Gender Equity in Education Act provides additional resources, training and technical assistance to educational entities to support compliance with Title IX. This bill establishes an Office of Gender Equity in the U.S. Department of Education to coordinate activities within the Department and

among other federal agencies. In addition, GEEA supports the work of thousands of Title IX coordinators by providing annual training and technical assistance. This bill also authorizes competitive grants to K-12 schools, colleges, local educational agencies, or states to support their gender equity work.

Decades after President Nixon signed Title IX in to law, girls and women have made great strides in education. Yet despite these accomplishments, more must be done to achieve equity. I urge you to cosponsor the Patsy T. Mink and Louise M. Slaughter Gender Equity in Education Act of 2019.

To become a cosponsor, please contact Ben Strand in Sen. Mazie Hirono's (D-HI) office at (202) 224-6361 or ben_strand@hirono.senate.gov. Cosponsorship and votes associated with this legislation may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund *Congressional Voting Record for the 116th Congress*. Please contact Anne Hedgepeth, Director of Federal Policy, at 202/785-7724, if you need additional information.

Sincerely,



Deborah J. Vagins
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Research

¹ Catherine Hill and Holly Kearn, "Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School" (American Association of University Women, November 2011), www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/Crossing-the-Line-Sexual-Harassment-at-School.pdf.

² Christianne Corbett and Catherine Hill, "Solving the Equation: The Variables for Women's Success in Engineering and Computing" (American Association of University Women, March 2015), www.aauw.org/research/solving-the-equation.

³ National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, *Title IX: Advancing Opportunity Through Equity in Education*, 2017, www.ncwge.org/career-tech.html.

⁴ National Federation of State High School Associations, *2017-18 High School Athletics Participation Survey*, September 2018, www.nfhs.org/ParticipationStatistics/PDF/2017-18%20High%20School%20Athletics%20Participation%20Survey.pdf.

⁵ National Women's Law Center and Poverty & Race Research Action Council, *Finishing Last: Girls of Color and School Sports Opportunities*, April 2015, nwlc.org/resources/finishing-last-girls-color-and-school-sports-opportunities.