



June 26, 2018

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE), a coalition of more than 30 organizations dedicated to improving educational opportunities for women and girls, including the 13 undersigned organizations, we urge you to cosponsor the Patsy T. Mink and Louise M. Slaughter Gender Equity in Education Act (GEEA) of 2018 (S. 3110/H.R. 6184). GEEA would help support the professionals and institutions who are working to achieve gender equity in education.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 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 but not limited to: ensuring pregnant and parenting students can stay in school; protecting access to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and other courses for students who are underrepresented in those fields; prohibiting sexual harassment and assault; and supporting equal opportunity to athletics.

Despite Title IX's passage 46 years ago, adherence to the provisions in the law are still far from universal and gender disparities in education still exist. Women continue to face serious barriers to entry and completion in many career and technical education programs, stifling their access to many high-demand, high-wage areas of employment.<sup>1</sup> Women's advancements in STEM fields, particularly in computer science and engineering, have stagnated or even declined over the years.<sup>2</sup> Over 50 percent of girls and 40 percent of boys in grades 7-12 face sexual harassment, and 87 percent of those students say it had a negative effect on them.<sup>3</sup> Girls continue to have 1.2 million fewer opportunities to play sports in high school than boys, a reality that is even more outsized for girls of color.<sup>4</sup> When students face these barriers in school they do not have full access to education.

Title IX coordinators play a critical role in overseeing Title IX compliance and ensuring gender equity in education. By law, every recipient of federal funds for education programs or activities must designate at least one employee as a Title IX coordinator.<sup>5</sup> These individuals are accountable for ensuring that schools address the full scope of Title IX, and therefore play a vital role in protecting all students from unlawful sex discrimination in school. But many education entities fail to meet the most basic requirement of having a Title IX coordinator in place.<sup>6</sup> Lack of proper training, authority, and systemic support are persistent hurdles for Title IX

coordinators. Many Title IX coordinators are also unaware of the full scope of their work. In an investigation of alleged Title IX violations at more than 100 schools, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) found that many had not designated a Title IX coordinator.<sup>7</sup> OCR noted that some of the most "egregious and harmful" Title IX violations occur when schools fail to have a Title IX coordinator in place, or when a Title IX coordinator does not have the training or authority to oversee compliance.<sup>8</sup>

In order to help schools implement Title IX requirements, Representative Patsy Mink introduced the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) in 1974 in order to help give schools the resources, funding, and technical assistance they need to fully implement Title IX. Representative Louise Slaughter was a staunch champion for Title IX and equity in education, spearheading these issues throughout her tenure in Congress. Despite the evidence of continuing gender inequities in education, WEEA was never fully funded.

Therefore, The Patsy T. Mink and Louise M. Slaughter Gender Equity in Education Act (GEEA) of 2018 recognizes the need to provide more resources, training and technical assistance to educational entities in order to ensure compliance with Title IX and prevent and reduce sex discrimination in all areas of education. GEEA builds on the original provisions of WEEA by providing support to schools to comply 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. Most importantly, GEEA supports the work of Title IX coordinators by providing the annual training, resources, and technical assistance needed to independently and effectively execute their responsibilities. This bill also authorizes competitive grants to K-12 schools, colleges, local educational agencies, and states to support their gender equity work. Title IX coordinators are a linchpin in addressing gender equity in schools and must have the independence, training, and resources to accurately and effectively execute their responsibilities.

Women and girls have made significant strides in education, yet additional action must be taken to ensure equity. All students deserve an equal opportunity to access education and this bill is a step towards achieving this goal. We urge you to support women and girls in education by cosponsoring the Patsy T. Mink and Louise M. Slaughter Gender Equity in Education Act of 2018 (S. 3110/H.R. 6184). If you have any questions, please contact Pam Yuen, Senior Government Relations Coordinator at the American Association of University Women (AAUW), at [yuenp@aauw.org](mailto:yuenp@aauw.org) or 202/785-7712.

Sincerely,

American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
American Federation of Teachers  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Girls Inc.  
Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund  
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)  
National Organization for Women

National Women's History Project  
National Women's Political Caucus  
Society of Women Engineers  
Stop Sexual Assault in Schools (SSAIS.org)  
Women's Sports Foundation  
YWCA USA

---

<sup>1</sup> NCWGE. (2017). *Title IX: Advancing Opportunity Through Equity in Education*. <http://www.ncwge.org/career-tech.html>.

<sup>2</sup> AAUW. (2015). *Solving the Equation: The Variables for Women's Success in Engineering and Computing*. <https://www.aauw.org/research/solving-the-equation/>.

<sup>3</sup> AAUW. (2011). *Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School*. <https://www.aauw.org/research/crossing-the-line/>.

<sup>4</sup> National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). (2016). *2015-16 High School Athletics Participation Survey*. [http://www.nfhs.org/ParticipationStatistics/PDF/2015-16\\_Sports\\_Participation\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.nfhs.org/ParticipationStatistics/PDF/2015-16_Sports_Participation_Survey.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> AAUW. (2018). *Find Your Title IX Coordinators with AAUW's Interactive Tool*. <https://www.aauw.org/resource/find-your-title-ix-coordinator/>.

<sup>6</sup> Inside Higher Ed. (2015). *Title IX Coordinators Required*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/04/27/education-department-reminds-colleges-hire-title-ix-coordinators>

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. (2015). *Dear Colleague Letter on Title IX Coordinators*. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201504-title-ix-coordinators.pdf>.