



October 3, 2025

Dear Senator,

Re: Opposition to the Nomination of Kimberly Richey as Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

On behalf of the American Association of University Women, representing members in your state and across the nation, I urge you to oppose Kimberly Richey's nomination to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces nondiscrimination laws in schools, protecting educational opportunities for all students. Congress established these protections through the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Education Amendments of 1972, and other federal policies. Despite progress, OCR remains essential: last year alone it received nearly 22,700 complaints. The Assistant Secretary must be deeply committed to enforcing federal law and safeguarding students' civil rights.

Unfortunately, several of Ms. Richey's past actions call into question her ability to obey federal law as she fulfills the duties of her office:

- During her first tenure in OCR, Richey incorrectly asserted that transgender inclusive sports policies in the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference violate Title IX. This argument was in conflict with Supreme Court precedent and threatens funding for Connecticut schools. Nevertheless, she threatened to rescind funding from Connecticut school districts.
- As senior fellow for education at the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, Richey opposed racial equity, social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, and discouraged trauma-informed instruction.
- During her Senate hearing, Richey refused to take a clear stance on the reversal of federal funding cuts and threats of cuts to school districts and institutions with racial and gender inclusive practices.

These actions are especially troubling given the current state of OCR. The Trump Administration closed seven of twelve regional civil rights offices, drastically reducing capacity. At the same time, the Department shifted its focus to rolling back protections for transgender students and dismantling DEI programs. Staff layoffs left more than 6,800 cases unresolved, and between March and June 2025 OCR dismissed an unprecedented number of complaints—raising grave doubts about the office's ability to fulfill its mission.

If confirmed, Ms. Richey would continue this harmful trajectory, further undermining OCR's ability to serve students.



Your role is to ensure nominees are qualified, capable, and dedicated to upholding federal law. Our nation's students deserve an Assistant Secretary who will enforce civil rights protections, preserve public education, and strengthen—not weaken—the Department of Education's capacity. They deserve someone who will advocate for them, not impose a political agenda.

Given Ms. Richey's ideological bias and failure to prioritize the enforcement of federal law, **AAUW has no confidence that she can meet the standards of this office. AAUW urges you to oppose Kimberly Richey's nomination as the U.S. Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.** Voting on Richey's nomination may be scored in the AAUW Action Fund's *Congressional Voting Record* for the 119th Congress.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-728-3300 or kissellm@aauw.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Meghan Kissell". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Meghan Kissell
Senior Director, Policy & Member Advocacy