

# **Hartford Courant, Letter to the Editor**

## **March 1, 2003**

### **Hands Off Title IX**

Dear Editor,

The proposed changes to Title IX by Bush Administration's Commission on Opportunity in Athletics will not only undermine equality for women and girls in sports, but legitimize and legalize harmful stereotypes that contradict fundamental principles of civil rights laws. This federal law, enacted in 1972, guarantees women and girls opportunities equal to those offered to boys and men in all education programs receiving taxpayers dollars.

The proposed changes stem from claims that are inaccurate, such as the suggestion that Title IX has evolved into a quota system thereby enhancing women's programs at the expense of men's and that these quotas may be forcing schools to create sports programs for women in which they have no interest.

This proposal fails to consider that since the enactment of Title IX, female participation in athletics has increased by more than 800% overall and female participation in intercollegiate athletics has increased by more than 400% despite a continued lack of parity with men's sports programs. For example, although women in Division I colleges comprise 53% of the student body, they receive only 41% of the opportunities to play intercollegiate sports; 43% of athletic scholarship dollars; 36% of athletic operating budgets; and 32% of the dollars to recruit new athletes.

Women today are not equally encouraged to participate in sports – approving these changes will only support this persistent discrimination and continue to discourage women's participation going forward.

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