Title IX Commission Report & Minority Report

On June 27, 2002, Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced the establishment of a blue-ribbon panel to study Title IX. This 15-member group, called the Commission on Opportunities in Athletics, was to collect information, analyze issues, and obtain broad public input directed at improving the application of current Federal standards for measuring equal opportunity for men and women and boys and girls to participate in athletics under Title IX. The Commission conducted four town-hall meetings in different parts of the country to obtain a public discussion of the issues and held two meetings to discuss their findings and develop their recommendations. The Commission finalized their work in early 2003 and on February 26, 2003, submitted their final report to U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige for consideration.

Due to the negative overall tone and a lack of representation of the minority voice in the final report, Julie Foudy and Donna DeVarona, two of the Commission members, developed an independent Minority Report. The Minority Report described many of the inequities in the process of the Commission and the potential harmful effects of some of the proposals forwarded to Secretary Paige. As indicated in the Minority Report, the Commission's report "fails to present a full and fair consideration of the issues or a clear statement of the discrimination women and girls still face in obtaining equal opportunity in athletics . . . many of the recommendations would seriously weaken Title IX's protections and substantially reduce the opportunities to which women and girls are entitled under current law . . . only one of the proposals would address the budgetary causes underlying the discontinuation of some men's teams, and others would not restore opportunities that have been lost."

Foudy joined with other high profile athletes, women's sports advocates, movie stars, and members of Congress (Senator Daschle, Senator Kennedy, Senator Murray, Senator Stevens) for a press conference that was held on Capitol Hill to present the Minority Report.
and to demonstrate support for the existing Title IX athletics regulations.

Shortly thereafter, Secretary Paige took action to limit his further review of the Commission’s recommendations to only those that received consensus (see below). Paige's initial action is positive in that it omits several proposals designed to weaken Title IX from consideration. However, there are a few controversial proposals still within the consent items, such as Nos. 12 and 15 below, which contain vague language and basically open the opportunity for change in unknown ways. Therefore, it is important to monitor the activities of the Department to ensure that the end results are consistent with the intent of Title IX and do not result in decreased opportunities for girls and women in sport.

Please see the www.nagws.org website for the complete Commission report, the Minority Report, and other critiques of the Commission report and process. Also, NAGWS has partnered with the NCWGE (National Coalition for Girls and Women in Education) to develop a national campaign to save Title IX. Please go to www.SaveTitleX.com to see how you can help protect this very important civil rights law.

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**Title IX Commission's Consensus Recommendations**

According to U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights will move forward only on those recommendations that received consensus. Therefore, of the 23 recommendations forwarded, Paige will limit his department's review to the following 15 recommendations:

1. The Department of Education should reaffirm its strong commitment to equal opportunity and the elimination of girls and boys, women and men.