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Title IX, the federal legislation that prohibits sex discrimination in federally funded education programs and activities, is one of the greatest success stories. AAUW was one of the organizations instrumental in bringing about the passage of Title IX in 1972. The law has since led to a more than 400 percent increase in the rate of female participation in college sports and a more than 800 percent increase in participation at the high school level. Female athletes are more likely to develop positive school and lifestyle habits. High school girls who participate in sports are less likely to experience an unintended pregnancy or to smoke or use illicit drugs, while they are more likely to have a positive body image than girls who do not play sports.

Despite the positive gains girls and women have made since the enactment of Title IX, a significant drawback to the law's enforcement at the high school level involves the lack of data reporting. While it is estimated that female students receive 1.3 million fewer opportunities to play high school sports than do male students, the U.S. Department of Education does not require high schools to make athletic opportunity, participation, and funding statistics publicly available, even though they already collect this data. Colleges are required to report this data, and it is time high schools are required to report, also.

AAUW members, and their coalition partners, are encouraged to support two federal bills, the High School Sports Information Collection Act (S. 471) and the High School Athletics Accountability Act (H.R. 2882) that will make participation rates and expenditures for high school athletes available to the public, helping communities, including those in Michigan, better enforce Title IX.

On April 20, 2010 the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights issued new guidance for Title IX, rescinding the deeply flawed March 2005 policy that allowed schools to use e-mail surveys to gauge the athletic interests of female students. The new guidance returns to the previous standard, under which schools will consider a number of factors, including athletic participation rates at the secondary school levels and interviews with coaches, to ensure they are following Title IX requirements.

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