

PROGRAM ON A PAGE (or two)

TITLE IX: CELEBRATE THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY!

Title IX celebrated its 35th anniversary in June 2007. We certainly recognize the nomenclature, but do we actually know all of the opportunities this landmark legislation has provided women and girls? Don't most of us think of "athletics," when we hear the words?

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the federal statute prohibiting sex discrimination in the education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. The law states: *"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."*

This is powerful language and affects all areas of education and has enabled women to pursue careers as lawyers, doctors, mechanics, scientists, as well as professional athletes. Title IX applies to institutions and educational programs receiving federal funds and addresses these crucial areas:

- Access and admission to higher education
- Career and technical education
- Equity in math, science, and technology education
- Sexual harassment
- Athletics

Title IX's work is Not Done

Title IX was designed to be a strong and comprehensive measure that would attack all forms of sex discrimination in education and provide educational opportunities formerly closed to women and girls. While Title IX has indeed succeeded in opening doors in the classroom and on the athletic field, inequities and barriers still remain. Even though the law has been vigorously enforced and public attention has been heightened to these issues, more progress can be made.

Consider the challenges girls and women still face:

- Sexual harassment remains pervasive in public schools—83 percent of girls and 79 percent of boys surveyed have experienced it.
- Sex segregation persists in career education with more than 90% of girls clustered in training programs for the traditionally female fields of health, teaching, graphic arts, and office technology.
- Women's teams receive only 33 percent of recruiting dollars and 39 percent of athletic dollars.
- Women receive only 20 percent of computer science and engineering related technology bachelor's degrees.
- Pregnant students are steered towards separate and less academically rigorous schools.

We should continue to be proud of the educational and athletic strides that women and girls continue to achieve. However, the statistics strongly indicate that our “work” is not yet done. We must make our mission matter in our communities. You can access the 35th Anniversary Resource Kit from the AAUW website (www.aauw.org) to elucidate not only AAUW members but also others about our quest. It is obvious that “inequity still exists.”