

**TAKE
ACTION!**

PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS' RIGHTS

Did your college say you could not participate in a program because you were pregnant? Did they refuse to excuse your pregnancy-related absences? Did your school take away your scholarship because you got pregnant? Or did you suffer another form of pregnancy discrimination? Title IX says schools cannot exclude students who may be, are, or have been pregnant from a program because of their condition. Here are some actions you can take to get relief and make sure no one else has to go through what you did. Remember, you can pursue more than one course of action!

1. Tell Your University

A. Report Discrimination to a Title IX Coordinator or University Administrator

- Every college that gets federal funds must have a Title IX Coordinator. This is someone who can give students unbiased info about their Title IX rights. They should also address possible instances of discrimination.
- If you are concerned about how to handle pregnancy-related absences, the Title IX Coordinator may help you coordinate with your professors. If you think you are being discriminated against, the Title IX coordinator should tell you about your school's formal reporting process.
- You may also talk to your school's disability coordinator. Schools must provide pregnant students and students with temporary disabilities similar services and accommodations.
- Look up your school's reporting process and resources on their website. This info may also be

in the student handbook. Learn your rights under Title IX and what practices the U.S. Department of Education recommends. Knowing your rights will be helpful when reporting discrimination to your university. You can find this information in this toolkit and on the website of the [Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights \(OCR\)](#).

- You can also report discrimination to OCR or file a Title IX claim in federal court.
- Title IX says your school must investigate your complaint even if you have filed a claim with OCR or in court.

B. Write a Letter to Your Administration

- Another way to put your college on notice of pregnancy discrimination is to send them a letter. Once your school gets notice of a claim of sex or pregnancy discrimination, it must investigate the claim under Title IX.
- Send this letter to the Title IX Coordinator and any other officials who hear students' complaints regarding discrimination, like the Dean of Students. You should be able to find their contact info in your student handbook or on your school's website.
- We have included a sample letter in this toolkit. You should tailor the letter to reflect your situation.
- Be sure to include how you want your school to fix the problem.



2. File a Complaint with the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

- Anyone who witnesses or has been the victim of sex discrimination in a school that gets federal financial aid can file a Title IX complaint with OCR. They can use the [electronic complaint form](#).
- The complaint should be sent to the [OCR enforcement office](#) that handles complaints for the state where your school is.
- A complaint must be filed within 180 days of the most recent date of the discrimination. In some cases, OCR may extend the deadline.
- You do not need a lawyer to file a complaint with OCR. But it can be helpful to have one. Our toolkit includes information about [what you need to file a complaint](#) and [what you can expect](#) once the process starts.

3. File a Federal or State Lawsuit

- You can file a lawsuit in federal court for pregnancy discrimination if your school does not comply with Title IX.
- You do not need to file a complaint with OCR before you file a lawsuit.
- If you already have a lawsuit pending when you file an OCR complaint, OCR may dismiss your complaint. OCR may also dismiss your complaint if you file a lawsuit while your OCR case is pending.
- You can file a lawsuit after your OCR complaint is resolved or closed.
- Time for filing a pregnancy discrimination lawsuit will depend on [the time limit set by your state](#) for personal injury actions. .
- Although you can file a lawsuit without a lawyer, we highly recommend that you speak with a lawyer and get legal help..