



Introduction

FIFTY YEARS AGO, Congress passed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), proclaiming that, with a few specific exceptions: “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 education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Title IX’s origins began in 1969 when Dr. Bernice Sandler was rejected from a full-time faculty position at the University of Maryland. The reason? She “c[a]me on too strong for

a woman.” Through her research into laws against sex discrimination, she discovered that President Lyndon Johnson had recently amended Executive Order 11246—which prohibited federal contractors from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, and religion—to include sex as well. Over the next two years, as a leader at Women’s Equity Action League (WEAL), Dr. Sandler filed complaints of sex discrimination under Executive Order 11246 with the Department of Education against approximately 250 educational institutions, relying on detailed data painstakingly compiled by women working

in academia across the United States about sex discrimination at their colleges and universities. She also sent hundreds of copies of her complaints to members of Congress, prompting them to send more than 300 letters to the Secretary of Labor demanding change. Her work inspired other individuals and organizations, including the National Organization for Women (NOW), to file another approximately 100 sex discrimination complaints under Executive Order 11246.

In 1970, these efforts began to produce tangible policy results. The Department of Labor and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (the predecessor to today's Department of Education) issued guidelines and memoranda on prohibited forms of sex discrimination by federal contractors. Rep. Edith Green (Ore.), another member of WEAL's national advisory board, held seven days of congressional hearings on sex discrimination in education and employment. Rep. Patsy Mink (Hawai'i), the first woman of color and first Asian American woman in Congress, drafted Title IX with assistance from Rep. Green and Sen. Birch Bayh (Ind.), who was himself another member of WEAL's national advisory board, as well as a sponsor of the Equal Rights Amendment and the lead sponsor of Title IX in the Senate. Finally, on June 23, 1972, Title IX was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Richard Nixon.

This year, on the 50th anniversary of Title IX's passage, we honor the countless individuals who made Title IX possible. We are especially grateful to:

- Rep. Patsy Mink, the primary author of Title IX, which was renamed in 2002 when she died as the "Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act."
- Rep. Edith Green, Title IX's sponsor in the House of Representatives, who was praised by a colleague as "the most powerful woman ever to serve in the Congress."
- Sen. Birch Bayh, Title IX's sponsor in the Senate, the "father of Title IX," and the principal architect of the Equal Rights Amendment, which has since been ratified by 38 states.
- Dr. Bernice Sandler, known as the "godmother of Title IX," whose work launched 50 years of unprecedented progress for gender equity in education, much of which she was able to witness before passing at the age of 90 in 2019.

There is much work to be done yet to advance gender equity in education. The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education invites you to read the accompanying issue briefs for more information on a range of Title IX issue areas, the progress (and setbacks) that have occurred since 1972, and our recommendations for the work that remains to be done:

- 1. Sexual Harassment**
- 2. Discriminatory Discipline Based on Sex and Race**
- 3. LGBTQI+ Students**
- 4. Pregnant and Parenting Students**
- 5. Athletics**
- 6. Gender- and Race-Conscious Programs**
- 7. Sex-Segregated Education**
- 8. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) & Career and Technical Education (CTE)**
- 9. Title IX Coordinators**