**Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972**

The actual text of "Title IX" is relatively brief:

*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...*

However, its impact on both men and women’s educational opportunities, sports, opportunities for employment and conditions in the workplace have been profound.

**History** of Title IX Passed by Congress on June 23, 1972, Title IX bars sex discrimination in educational programs and activities by any institution receiving federal funds. Title IX’s fundamental principle is students may not be denied educational opportunities based on their sex any more than they should be denied opportunities because of their race, religion, or place of national origin. This principle applies to a wide range of activities offered by schools including financial aid, student services and counseling, and athletics and physical education. Schools are also responsible for preventing sex-based harassment and for responding quickly and effectively when it occurs. In addition, Title IX prohibits a school from retaliating against a person because he or she opposed an act of discrimination performed by a school.1

Congress passed Title IX in response to numerous educational inequalities women faced prior to the 1970s. Many colleges and universities had limited quotas for the admission of women or prohibited them altogether. Women were often subjected to higher admission standards than men and if they were admitted, women were restricted from participating in programs considered traditionally male, and they had less access to scholarships. In many educational institutions, discrimination extended to female faculty members who were denied tenure, dismissed for being pregnant, or denied access to faculty clubs.

**Opposition** to Title IX After its enactment, Title IX became a focal point in the backlash towards the women’s movement. The law brought into question social and financial traditions regarding education, sports, and women. The battle to preserve these traditions was fought at every level of education: elementary and secondary school as well as colleges and universities. This was particularly true in school athletics departments. Legislators and education officials worried about how the new law would affect men’s athletics and looked for ways to limit its influence. Some felt revenue- producing sports such as men’s college football and basketball should be exempt from the law. Others felt that for schools to comply within the law, men’s sports such as wrestling would have to be cut. Conservative opponents of women’s rights believed that feminists used Title IX as a way to promote their agenda in schools. Since 1975, there have been over twenty court challenges to Title IX.

The **Impact** of Title IX Title IX has been attributed to the increase in graduation rates for women. In 1970, 59 percent of women had a high school education and 8 percent had college degrees. In 2009, approximately 87 percent of women had at least a high school education and approximately 28 percent had at least a college degree. In addition, enrollment in higher education has increased at a greater rate for women than men. Women now have higher graduation rates and lower high school dropout rates, take more Advanced Placement exams and earn more advanced degrees than their male counter parts.2

The biggest impact of Title IX was in women’s sports. In 1971, fewer than 295,000 girls participated in high school athletics. By 2001, that number increased to 2.8 million. In 1966, 16,000 females competed in intercollegiate athletics. By 2001 that number jumped to more than 150,000.

Title IX has been attributed to the increased success by women in the 2012 Summer Olympics where more women than men were members of the U.S Team and the U.S. women won 58 medals to the men's 45 and 29 gold medals compared to the men's 17.

The benefits of Title IX extend beyond those experienced at school. Women also have greater opportunity to participate in the labor force, increase their earnings and have greater access to better healthcare. And yet, as of 2010, women working full-time earned only 77 percent of the amount earned by their male counterparts. By prohibiting schools from treating students differently on the basis of sex, Title IX also allows both men and women to take advantage of any course of study regardless of gender stereotypes and protects both sexes from sexual harassment.

The **Future** of Title IX Title IX has made great progress in advancing educational equality, but more work needs to be done, according to a recent report issued by the U.S. Department of Justice.5 Women continue to enter science and technology professions at lower rates than men and earn fewer postsecondary degrees in math and sciences. Women in high school and college continue to have fewer athletic opportunities than men. Pregnant and parenting students are often times relegated to separate facilities or are subject to harsh absence policies. Sex-based harassment and assault continue to pose a significant threat to safe learning environments and equal educational opportunities. Both male and female students are victims of gender-related harassment, with a greater percentage of victims of hate-related language related to gender directed at women. Gender stereotypes remain prevalent in many educational institutions and both male and female students face harassment if they don’t conform to these gender stereotypes.

Title IX continues to face opposition from men’s athletic teams and conservative politicians and organizations who feel that Title IX sets up a quota system, jeopardizes men’s sports and fosters reverse discrimination. Since its passage, opponents have tried to reform some of the inequities they see in the law, through exemptions to certain male sports, reduced funding for programs and enforcement, and court challenges. No law is perfect and since Title IX’s passage, the law has been adjusted and some reforms have been implemented. It will be up to future generations of both men and women to weigh the costs and benefits and determine whether the law can continue to benefit both genders.