

Cosponsor the High School Athletics Accountability Act (H.R. 2882)

January 5, 2010

Dear Representative:

We are writing to urge you to cosponsor the **High School Athletics Accountability Act (H.R. 2882)**, which was introduced by Reps. Louise McIntosh Slaughter (D-NY) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV). This legislation would require that high schools report basic data on the number of female and male students participating in their athletics programs and the expenditures made for their sports teams. Schools already collect the data required under this legislation; however, these data currently are not publicly available. By making this information available to the public, this important bill would significantly expand the ability of schools, students, parents, and the public at large to improve gender equity on our nation's playing fields and to better realize the promise of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Title IX's impact on women's athletic participation is one of the country's greatest success stories. In the past three decades, Title IX has led to a 574 percent increase in the rate of female participation in college sports and a 1,000 percent increase in participation at the high school level.¹ In addition to learning teamwork, statistics have shown that girls thrive when they participate in sports. They are less likely than girls who do not participate in sports to get pregnant, drop out of school, do drugs, smoke, or develop mental illness.² The benefits girls receive from participating in sports can lead to success in all aspects of life.

Despite the significant gains made since the enactment of Title IX, women and girls are still facing pervasive inequalities. Although girls comprise 49 percent of the high school population, they receive only 41 percent of all athletic participation opportunities—1.3 million fewer participation opportunities than male high school athletes.³ Qualitative analysis suggests that high school girls still lag behind not only in participation opportunities, but also in the allocation of operating and recruitment budgets and in other benefits and services such as equipment, facilities, and publicity.⁴ But unlike their collegiate counterparts, high schools are not required to publicly disclose any data on equity in sports—making it difficult for schools, students, and parents to identify sources of inequity and ensure fairness in their schools' athletics programs.

Much of the information required by this legislation is already kept by schools. The High School Athletics Accountability Act will simply make the data available to the public. The National Federation of State High School Associations requires that school administrators submit annual reports of their athletic participation numbers by sport and gender to their state high school athletic associations. Additionally, school bookkeepers already keep records of school expenditures, including those made within the athletic department. This legislation merely requires that schools transfer these existing data into a report that is publicly available, a task that should take an administrator two to six hours maximum to perform, depending on the number of sports offered.⁵

In addition, both Kentucky and Georgia have adopted and successfully implemented similar state legislation that requires high schools to submit annual reports with information regarding their athletic participation rates and expenditures. Since the implementation of this legislation, administrators of the compliance programs in the Kentucky and Georgia State High School Athletic Associations have said they have seen significant improvements in the Title IX compliance of their

member schools.⁶ New Mexico also passed similar legislation in April 2009.

By cosponsoring the **High School Athletics Accountability Act (H.R. 2882)** you would be taking the first step toward ensuring that future generations of girls are granted equal opportunities to play sports and to receive the many benefits that accompany that participation. We urge you to contact Dan Carroll (dan.carroll@mail.house.gov or 202/225-3615) in Rep. Slaughter's office to co-sponsor this important legislation.

Sincerely,

9to5, National Association of Working Women
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
AAUW Arlington (VA) Branch
AAUW Atlanta (GA) Branch
AAUW Auburn (CA) Branch
AAUW Ballwin-Chesterfield (MO) Branch
AAUW Georgetown (TX) Branch
AAUW Goshen (IN) Branch
AAUW Grand Rapids (MI) Branch
AAUW Indianapolis (IN) Branch
AAUW Mid-Coast (ME) Branch
AAUW Noblesville (IN) Branch
Seattle AAUW Inc.
AAUW St. Lawrence County (NY) Branch
AAUW State College Branch, State College, PA
AAUW Washington On-line Branch
AAUW Wheaton-Glen Ellyn (IL) Branch
AAUW Twin Rivers/New Bern (NC) Branch
American Federation of Teachers
American Volleyball Coaches Association
Annie Appleseed Project
Association for Gender Equity Leadership in Education (AGELE)
Business & Professional Women of North Lake (FL) (BPW/North Lake)
California Commission on the Status of Women
Center for Research on Physical Activity, Sport & Health at D'Youville College
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Democratic Women's Club of Lake County, FL (DWCLC)
Equal Rights Advocates
Feminist Majority
Florida Federation of Business & Professional Women, Inc. (BPW/FL)
Girls Inc.
Girl Scouts of the USA
Healthy Teen Network
Legal Aid Society
National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators
National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW)
National Association for Girls and Women in Sport
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Jewish Women

National Council of Women's Organizations
National Education Association
National Organization for Women Foundation
National Organization for Women, Boston Chapter
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Conference Committee
National Women's Law Center
NCLR (National Council of La Raza)
New York Women's Agenda
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southwest Women's Law Center
The DadMan and Dads & Daughters
The Myra Sadker Foundation
U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women's Basketball Coaches Association
Women's Business Development Center – Chicago
Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press
Women's Law Project
Women & Politics Institute, American University
Women's Research & Education Institute
Women's Sports Foundation

¹ Women's Sports Foundation. (2008). *Gender Equity in Athletics Statistics Update: 2007-2008 High School and College Data*. The percentages were calculated using data from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) 2007-2008 High School Athletics Participation Survey and the NCAA 2005-2006 Gender Equity Report.

² Women's Sports Foundation. (December 12, 2007). *Women's Sports & Physical Activity Facts & Statistics*. Retrieved January 16, 2008, from http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/binary-data/WSF_ARTICLE/pdf_file/191.pdf.

³ National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). 2007-2008 High School Athletics Participation Survey. (<http://www.nfhs.org/>) and National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). 2006-2007. (<http://nces.ed.gov/>).

⁴ National Women's Law Center. (June 2008). "The Battle for Gender Equity in Athletics in Elementary and Secondary Schools." Retrieved August 4, 2009, from <http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/Battle%20final.pdf>.

⁵ Conversations between Women's Sports Foundation staff and compliance officers at the Georgia and Kentucky State High School Athletic Associations and high school athletic directors in Missouri. May 2007.

⁶ See note 5.