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Statement of David S. Cohen Women's Law Project Staff Attorney Report Author

This report is chock-full of information about Pennsylvania schools' compliance with gender equity requirements. There's a lot in here, but I want to concentrate on three of the most importance pieces of information to take away from this Report:

First, Pennsylvania's schools are shortchanging their female athletes almost across the board. Even though more than 53% of full time students are female, only 43% of athletes are. To rectify that disparity, schools would have to add over 8000 more slots for female athletes. In areas of funding, Pennsylvania schools are putting only sixty cents into women's athletics for every dollar spent on men's athletics. That means schools are spending less on operating expenses, scholarships, recruiting, and coaching for women. The one area I'd like to highlight is recruiting: schools spend more than twice as much to recruit male athletes as they do to recruit female athletes. Without putting the same resources into getting female athletes to come to their schools to play sports, Pennsylvania schools are pre-determining that they will not have enough female athletes at their school.

Second, football is a big factor in the differential spending on men's and women's athletics but it is by no means an absolute bar to having an equitable distribution of opportunities. The common perception is that football's huge rosters make it impossible for schools to have equal number of slots for female athletes. However, Pennsylvania has several examples of schools that have big football programs and equal participation numbers for women. Most prominent among those examples is Penn State. Penn State has a nationally recognized and almost perennially competitive football program and yet it also is one of the best schools in the state for equal opportunity for women. Other examples of schools with big football programs and equal opportunities for women include Bucknell and Lehigh. There's a very simple conclusion here: schools committed to their female athletes can be fair and nondiscriminatory if they choose to do so; schools that point to football as a scapegoat for inequality are just making excuses for discrimination.

Third, we hope this report forces Pennsylvania's colleges and universities to examine their distribution of resources and gives the community -- students, advocates, and the public -- ammunition to demand that schools to do a better job in treating female athletes fairly. A report like this is possible because the federal

government has mandated that colleges and universities publicly report their athletic data. However, there is no such legislation for high school athletics. Being able to hold those programs accountable is very important. A handful of states have done so already, and, in the absence of movement on pending federal legislation to make this a requirement nationwide, we call on the Pennsylvania legislature to enact this simple piece of legislation that would require high schools to report their athletic data. If we can guarantee that all high school students are treated fairly, we can give colleges more opportunities to recruit female athletes.