

Women's Law Project

MAIN OFFICE
125 South Ninth Street
Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19107

T: 215.928.9801 F: 215.928.9848
W: www.womenslawproject.org
E: info@womenslawproject.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Stella M. Tsai (Chair)
David F. Abernethy
Catherine T. Barbieri
Suzanne Sheehan Becker
Gieranne DiPiano
Anna Doering
Patricia A. Dubin
James J. Eisenhower
Nancy O'Mara Ezold
Vicki W. Kramer
Dorothy Mann
Jay K. Meadway
Joann Mitchell
Lois Eisner Murphy
Kimberly Mutcherson
Kimberly C. Oxholm
Mary F. Platt
Sarah E. Ricks
Lisa Sloan
Robin A. Stuntebeck
Carol E. Tracy (ex-officio)
Lynn Yeakel

Statement of Terry Fromson Managing Attorney, Women's Law Project In Support of S.B. 985

We are here today to join with Senator Williams in celebrating the 35th anniversary of Title IX by calling for the adoption of legislation that will give Pennsylvania schools, students and parents essential information to help them enforce their rights under Title IX.

Title IX has changed the way young women think about themselves and their bodies. Since 1972 the number of young women participating in school sports has increased exponentially.

In addition, Title IX has overwhelming bipartisan support. A recent poll by the Melman Goup found that 82% of Americans favor Title IX and support those who take action to remedy inequality.

In spite of its enormous successes and public support, resistance to full implementation of Title IX continues to exist.

Too often, young women and their parents must resort to federal litigation or other actions in order to participate in athletics or be treated fairly when participating.

The WLP has assisted students, parents, coaches, and officials in asserting their legal right to fair and equitable opportunities and treatment in athletic programs.

At the college level, it is easier to evaluate such requests and provide assistance because federal law requires colleges and universities to publish annual reports detailing enrollment, athletic participation and other data regarding their athletic programs by gender. This law is the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act (EADA). The public availability of this information has allowed schools and their students to take steps to achieve equity.

After analyzing the information made available under the EADA for Pennsylvania colleges and universities from 2001 through 2004, the Women's Law Project published a report in November 2005 detailing exactly where those 112 schools stand. Our report provides a snapshot of

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Carol E. Tracy

MANAGING ATTORNEY Terry L. Fromson

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR Dabney Miller

SENIOR STAFF ATTORNEY Susan Frietsche*

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR/ STAFF ATTORNEY Lisa JG Weikel

STAFF ATTORNEY Amal Bass

PROGRAM MANAGER *WomenVote PA* Barbara B. DiTullio

FAMILY EQUALITY COORDINATOR Tara Reynolds ~ Pittsburgh*

ACCOUNTANT Grace Knight

OFFICE MANAGER Debi Morrison

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS Tracie Kennerly ~ Philadelphia Stephanie McKnight ~ Pittsburgh*

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE*
Regional Enterprise Tower
425 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1860
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
T: 412.227.0301 F: 412.227.0417
E: infopitt@womenslawproject.org

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

the extent to which our institutions of higher learning are acting in a non-discriminatory fashion with respect to distribution of athletic opportunities and benefits, and ultimately the extent to which those schools are contributing overall to the health and well-being the young women they educate. What we found was that:

- Pennsylvania is not providing athletic opportunities for women proportionate to their enrollment. More than half of the athletic programs provide a significantly disproportionate number of opportunities to female athletes.
- 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.
- Female athletes get significantly less financial support from colleges and universities in terms of overall operating budgets, athletic scholarships, recruiting dollars, and coaching resources.

We don't have access to the same kind of information for our secondary schools. At the same time we were analyzing the college level data, we teamed up with the Pennsylvania Commission for Women to ask secondary schools to provide us with similar information for their athletic programs. As you have heard, we did not get enough of a response to provide valid conclusions.

Thus, while national data provided by the National Federation of State High School Associations tells us that secondary schools continue to provide boys with more opportunities than girls - and the gap is growing - we do not have access to Pennsylvania-wide data or school-by-school data. As a result, the schools do not confront the disparities in their programs, and parents and students face enormous challenges in obtaining the data they need to evaluate and advocate for equity.

Legislation is needed in Pennsylvania to make public data that is necessary to hold secondary school accountable in their treatment of girls' athletics.