

Women Are Watching: Indignation Over Potential Repeal to Gender Equity Reporting Law

Monday, June 17, 2013, Philadelphia, PA – On Tuesday, June 18, 2013, the Pennsylvania House Education Committee will vote on a bill to repeal provisions of Act 82 which require public high schools, junior highs, and middle schools to fill out a reporting form once a year showing how schools are doing in achieving gender equity in their athletic programs. Last year's passage of the reporting law was a victory for women and girls statewide who participate in athletics, and a sign of support more broadly for women and girls from a state legislature with a consistent track record and aggressive agenda of eroding women's rights.

"We are stunned that repeal of this important bill is even up for a committee vote," said Sue Frietsche, Senior Staff Attorney at the Women's Law Project, "No one who supports equality for women and fair opportunities for girls as well as boys should support this bill."

The reporting law simply provides the taxpaying public with knowledge about whether their local schools are in compliance with or in violation of Title IX, which passed more than four decades ago. Federally-funded public school districts in Pennsylvania are required to comply with federal and state anti-discrimination laws and Title IX.

The annual reporting provisions in Act 82 are estimated to require high school athletic directors to invest no more than six hours a year to complete, a reasonable requirement to ensure female athletes in Pennsylvania's schools are provided with the athletic opportunities required by law. "This repeal effort is a throwback to the days when women were thought to be too fragile to play sports," Frietsche continued. "Many schools have not only failed to achieve equality in their sports programs, but overall, conditions have actually worsened for girls. This is the wrong time to be cutting back on parents' and students' access to basic information about the sports programs their tax dollars are paying for."

About the Women's Law Project

The Women's Law Project is a public interest law center with offices in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The WLP challenges gender discrimination on a broad ranges of issues and has extensive experience in challenging and changing athletic participation for women and girls in Pennsylvania.