

# Women's Sports? Thank the Civil Rights Act of 1964

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Title IX (“Title Nine”) is the federal law of 1972 that requires gender equity for boys and girls in every educational program that receives federal funding. It’s also known as the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act.<sup>1</sup> Many people who have heard of Title IX think it applies only to sports, but athletics is only one of ten key areas addressed by the law:

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Access to Higher Education | 6. Athletics                                     |
| 2. Career Education           | 7. Education for Pregnant and Parenting Students |
| 3. Employment                 | 8. Learning Environment                          |
| 4. Math and Science           | 9. Sexual Harassment                             |
| 5. Standardized Testing       | 10. Technology                                   |

Title IX has been the subject of over 20 proposed amendments, reviews, Supreme Court cases, and other political actions. The 40-year anniversary of the law arrives in 2012, yet thousands of schools across the country still are not in compliance with the law.<sup>2</sup>

The Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) focused national attention on the importance of educational opportunity. In fact, Title IX is based on Title VI (“Title Six”) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in federally assisted programs.<sup>3</sup>

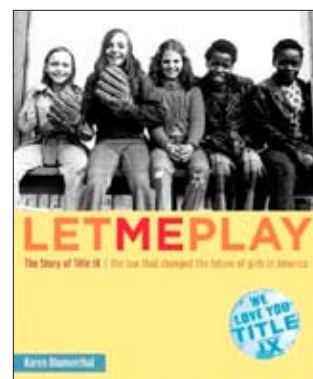
## Timeline of Educational Opportunity



### Suggestions for Discussion

Ask students to silently read the text above, and then ask one student to read it aloud. Lead a class discussion.

- Have students heard of “Title Nine”? And did they realize it grew out of the Civil Rights Act of 1964?
- How does your school today recognize “gender equity for boys and girls in every educational program?”
- Would some students like to plan an oral history interview with their mothers or grandmothers about their participation in high school or college sports?<sup>4</sup>
- What other groups in our society have had their educational opportunities boosted by federal laws? (People with disabilities; children of non-citizen migrant workers; parenting students.)



### Notes

1. Patsy T. Mink, the first woman of color elected to Congress, participated in the passage of much of the 1960s Great Society legislation during the first phase of her congressional career. See [womenincongress.house.gov](http://womenincongress.house.gov).
2. “History of title IX,” at [www.titleix.info](http://www.titleix.info). This website explains the regulations in easy-to-understand language and uses real case studies as examples. It also provides ways to find out about Title IX in your local community.
3. “Sex Discrimination in Education: Overview of Title IX,” note 3, at [www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/bitstreams/489.pdf](http://www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/bitstreams/489.pdf).
4. Further reading for students: Karen Blumenthal, *Let Me Play: The Story of Title IX: The Law That Changed the Future of Girls in America* (New York: Atheneum, 2005). For teachers: Susan Ware, *Title IX: A Brief History with Documents* (The Bedford Series in History and Culture) (New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2006).

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