

**From:** Bellefeuille, Barb  
**Sent:** Thu, 10 Jun 2021 20:54:52 +0000  
**To:** T9PublicHearing  
**Subject:** Title IX Public Hearing comments

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To Whom it Concerns,

I am writing to comment on the Department of Education's public hearing to gather information in order to improve enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX).

Training men and women in the tenets of a specific faith position is paramount to a religion's continued existence. The freedom of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment affords private religious institutions the right to exercise their sincerely held religious beliefs. In drafting Title IX, Congress recognized that there may be times when a statute prohibiting sex discrimination conflicts with the tenets of a religious educational institution. It is for this reason that it included the religious exemption in the statutory language. And the statutory exemption is aptly drafted to address the tension that may exist between the rights of any students to have access to an education free from discrimination and religious institutions' right to freedom of religion. The exemption only precludes application of those provisions of Title IX and its implementing regulations that are inconsistent with the institution's religious tenets. This allows each religious institution to adopt policies on sexual orientation and gender identity that align with their specific religious beliefs.

I find the current wording to be remarkably balanced. No human being should suffer discrimination and no private religious institution, where students attend voluntarily, should be denied their right to uphold lifestyle standards consistent with their beliefs. Any adjustment to the religious exemption language would deny First Amendment rights.

Sincerely,

**Barbara K. Bellefeuille, Ed.D.**

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