

From: Miranda Martone
Sent: Fri, 11 Jun 2021 16:59:27 -0400
To: T9PublicHearing
Subject: Title IX Public Hearing Written Submission

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To
US Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona:

Between the ages of 8 and 10 I was raped. My mind tried to protect me by burying the memories.

In college, I was raped again and suddenly a tsunami of memories came crashing down. My mind was flooded with a lifetime of enduring sexual violence simply because I tried to get an education.

Why am I sharing this with you? To demand your attention. I am using my pain as a platform to tell you one thing -- Title IX must prevent sexual violence.

Let me make an analogy. In the early 1980s, drunk driving was at an all time high with over 20,000 deaths per year and thousands more life-altering injuries. The Department of Transportation began the Drunk Driving Prevention campaign dedicated to preventing people from driving drunk. Since then, drunk driving has decreased by over 52%, saving over 300,000 lives. Let's imagine that instead of launching a prevention strategy, they only focused on victims. When someone was hurt or killed by a drunk driver, investigators would investigate their claims and therapists would help them heal. Would this strategy have saved 300,000 lives? No. Investigators and therapists are certainly important but they don't prevent drunk driving. The victim is already hurt, or worse, dead. So why is this our current approach to sexual violence?

I
speak on behalf of all survivors when I say that even if the best therapists and Title IX investigators are available, I would much prefer my rape was prevented in the first place.

Sexual
violence is life altering. No matter how much support and healing I do, I will never fully recover. There is no earthly justice for the harm I have endured. Prevention is the only option. So why didn't Title IX prevent this from happening to me? Why does

Title IX still lack prevention?

The

reason is rape culture. Society places all responsibility on victims. Victim blaming makes people feel better. It is comforting to think that we can prevent sexual violence by simply wearing the right clothes and taking a self-defense class. Even if that were true, we wouldn't be preventing sexual violence. We'd be ensuring perpetrators chose a different victim. The only way to prevent sexual violence is to prevent perpetation.

What

does Title IX say about that? It says the only way to prevent perpetration is for victims to report. The entire system places the responsibility on victims to go through the traumatic and flawed process of investigation and adjudication. When victims choose not to report or are unable to do so, they are blamed when their perpetrator attacks again.

Perpetration

has been deemed inevitable by omission. Rape culture is so deeply engrained in our society that it seems unfathomable to consider preventing people from becoming perpetrators. I am here to tell you Title IX has the power to prevent perpetration.

My

name is Miranda Martone and I am the Founder and CEO of the Sexual Violence Prevention Association. There are policies, programs, and practices proven to prevent perpetration. In order to deliver on it's promise to protect people from discrimination, Title IX must prevent perpetration.

My experience is not unique. Across the U.S., there are thousands of girls who are unable to receive an education free from discrimination due to rampant sexual violence.

Last year, the Department of Education found that sexual violence in K12 education rose by over 50% - from about 9,600 in the 2015-2016 school year to nearly 15,000 in the 2017-2018 school year. Nearly 95% of female high school seniors say sexual violence is one of their top concerns for attending university. In college, over 91% of female students experience sexual violence*. Over 43% of student survivors drop out. Of those who don't, 76% see a drop in grades and 58% are unable to graduate on time. The result is disastrous education disparities for women across the country.

You

have the power to prevent this. Sexual violence is preventable.

Until

now, the focus of Title IX has been to increase the civil rights, supports, and protections of survivors. Though important, Title IX has yet to address this issue at its root. To uphold your responsibility to provide education free from discrimination, sexual violence must be prevented.

Below

are our recommendations for preventing sexual violence and listening directly to student survivors.

All

institutions of elementary, middle, high school, and higher education should be required to adopt a comprehensive prevention program for all students, faculty, and staff. These programs must include the following evidence-based practices.

Universal

- The prevention program must be required for all students with an active status including transfer students, students studying abroad, graduate students, and part-time students.
- The prevention program must be required for all staff and faculty members including adjunct professors, librarians, TAs, RAs, etc.

Frequency

- All those who are covered, must receive a minimum of 1 hour of training every six months.
- Institutions are highly encouraged to adopt the low dosage - high frequency model. For example, holding a 30 minute training every three months.

Personnel

- The program should be administered to an audience of no more than 200 people.
- For elementary, middle, and high schools, it is highly encouraged that the program is administered by a "trusted adult". This means an adult the students are already familiar with such as their teacher, guidance counselor, or nurse.

Program

- The program must be conducted in person to the best extent possible. When not reasonably possible, it must be conducted live using a virtual medium (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams).
- The program cannot consist of an online module or pre-recorded videos.

Resources

- Prior to the program, the school must provide a confidential process for requesting accommodations for students who have experienced sexual violence and may find attending prevention programming upsetting.
- During and immediately following the program, the school must provide resources that are on-site and/or immediately available for students who experience mental health issues as a result of the topics covered.

Content

- The content must be evidence-based, medically accurate, and in compliance with contemporary best practices.
- The content must incorporate proven best practices for changing social norms/personnel actions, bystander intervention, and accessing survivor support.
- In elementary, middle, and

high schools the content must cover safe/unsafe touch, creating/respecting boundaries, identifying trusting adults. These topics do not need to be covered every year but each student should be trained on them at some point.

- In higher education, the content must cover affirmative consent, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and digital harassment. These topics do not need to be covered every year but each student should be trained on them at some point.

Compounding

- For elementary, middle, and high schools, the material must be age appropriate.
- For elementary, middle, and high schools, the material must be continuous and build upon itself. It cannot cover the same topics every year.

Reporting

- All schools must report to the Department of Education the full list of students, what dates they attended the program, the length of the program, the topics covered, whether it was virtual or in person, and whether they received an excused absence.

Adaptive

- The program must be evaluated internally on an annual basis.
- Every two years, the program must be adapted based on the internal evaluations, new research, and best practices.
- The decision-making process for updating the program must include students and alumni who graduated within the past 5 years.

Thank
you,
Miranda
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Miranda Martone

Founder & Chief Empowerment Officer
Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA)

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From: Miranda Martone
Sent: Fri, 11 Jun 2021 17:00:07 -0400
To: T9PublicHearing
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