

From: Sara Kate Wilson
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To: T9PublicHearing
Subject: Written Comment: Title IX Public Hearing

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My name is Sara Wilson (she/her) and I am a Campus Advocate with Cal Poly Safer. In my position, I help survivors understand their basic rights, resources, and options for moving forward whether that involves reporting, academics, counseling, medical care, or processing what happened to them. Pursuing this as my career has made me all too familiar with how survivors of sexual violence are struggling to make ends meet during their time at the university. I cannot emphasize enough how sex discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, is an absolute threat to equal access to educational environments for students of all ages.

It's necessary that Cardona and the Office of Civil Rights act immediately to rescind the new Title IX regulations implemented under Trump and strengthen protections for survivors. Title IX has always been a confusing and intimidating process for survivors, and we must eliminate the barriers to seeking help in order to provide equity on campus.

The new definition of sexual harassment should preclude what it was before the new regulations mandated the violations must rise to the level of being "so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive" in order for a school to formally investigate a complaint. There is a major need for universities to investigate instances of sexual violence off campus – majority of students live off campus and it is the universities responsibility to ensure that ALL survivors are able to access the support they need to maintain their academic obligations. The new "clear and convincing" standard is unrealistic because it is extremely uncommon for cases involving sexual violence to have a lot of evidence, and the new standard also inherently communicates the message that survivors are not believed. Mandatory cross examination is unnecessary and traumatizing for survivors. We also must ensure that both parties have the ability to be represented by attorneys that understands and specializes in Title IX. All survivors should be able to be represented by these lawyers, not just those who can afford to hire them. If universities are not required to do so, they are contributing to the inequity of this process. These demands are the BARE minimum to support survivors on campus. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sara Wilson

pronouns she/her(s)

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make an appointment w/ me <https://calendly.com/skwilson>

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