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To: T9PublicHearing
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Subject: Title IX Hearing - Written Submission from Confirmation Number
KJNDMVJ48MD
Attachments: Title IX Hearing Comments 2.docx

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Written submission of hearing comments from Tracy Dundon, provided on June 10th, Session 14, Confirmation Number # KJNDMVJ48MD

I had technical difficulties and wanted to make sure my comments were received.

I appreciate this opportunity to share a parent's perspective on how the Department of Education can take steps to ensure that K-12 school districts are providing students with an educational environment that is safe, equitable and free from discrimination.

Over the past two years, I have been on the ground floor working with and supporting a local student movement to address sexual violence and cultural issues within our schools and to create community awareness around this hidden, ignored and mishandled crisis.

I share with you my observations and experiences so that system failures and common roadblocks and resistance by school districts can be addressed. New Title IX rules and regulations are needed, but if the systems in place to maintain and enforce these rules and regulations are inefficient, then we continue to fail our students.

Relying on the honor system and assuming that school districts are proactively taking the steps necessary to become Title IX compliant, is a mistake. Relying heavily on impacted school children and their parents to file a complaint with the OCR to have corrective actions taken, is a mistake. To assume that parents and students know their Title IX rights and that school districts are willing to acknowledge and address the problem of sexual violence and discrimination, is a mistake.

I suspect that of the 14,000 public school districts in the United States, a majority are not Title IX compliant. In turn, failing to provide the approximately 55 million K-12 students with the basic protections and rights that the law was created to provide.

If the Department of Education and the OCR are truly committed to ensuring that all K-12 school districts are compliant, then a more proactive and hands on approach should be taken to audit, monitor and enforce Title IX regulations.

School districts must be held accountable, and ill-informed parents and students should not have to bare that responsibility. The Department of Education and the Office for Civil Rights must step in or the positive systemic and cultural changes that we desperately need, will not be realized.

My last comment is more of a suggestion that might help engage school districts and foster Title IX awareness.

Would the Department of Education consider creating another national program similar to the Blue-Ribbon School Program? A new program that would acknowledge and award schools for

their Title IX compliance, the culture and climate of the school, and their prevention and intervention efforts to name a few.

The problem we face as parents and students within our school districts goes beyond modifying Title IX regulations, we need additional support, a new approach, and vigorous top-down enforcement.

Thank you

Additional comments.....

If the DOE or the OCR would like to meet with a group of student survivors who turned advocates and/or parents from our local area, let me know. I am a parent supporter of the student movement and would encourage connecting with us for an open and much needed conversation. Students from Boulder and Denver are struggling to address the problem of sexual violence within their school districts and to make systemic and cultural changes. If interested, there are a few articles about student and BOE member crimes, walkouts, and student movement activities from the past 18 months, along with a recent Colorado Public Radio story by Jenny Brundin. Several teenagers and a handful of parents cannot do this alone. We need help from folks in positions of power!

Please consider creating a national program to support and encourage Title IX excellence, safety, awareness and equity at the K-12 district level. You could create a "safety rating" scale and rank each school. Too many sexual misconduct claims, mandatory reporting failures, delayed grievance resolutions, outdated policies and procedures, etc. could result in a "bad" safety rating. Just a thought. Districts and schools will respond if they receive negative public attention.