

TO CHAIR WILLIAMSON, VICE -CHAIRS GORSEK AND SPRENGER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

FROM: Mary Pat Silveira, Member of the American Association of University Women of Oregon

RE: Support for House Bill 2562

I write this in support of House Bill 2562.

Title IX was groundbreaking legislation. It prohibits gender discrimination in all educational institutes and programs that receive federal funding. It protects not only women and girls but also men and boys, members of the LGBTQ and non-binary community, and staff. Although perhaps best known for demanding equality in school sports, Title IX addresses every single aspect of education, from curriculum, counseling and financial assistance to marital and parental status of students, educational programs and activities and employment.

However groundbreaking the legislation, though, it cannot protect our kids unless it is enforced. Title IX mandates that schools develop policies, adopt and publish guidelines against sex discrimination and provide a grievance protocol. Each school is also required to have a Title IX coordinator who serves as the primary resource in identifying sex discrimination, resolving grievances and providing equity information and training. To accomplish this, these coordinators themselves need to be trained and supported.

Unfortunately, Oregon has yet to develop state-wide training programs or continuing education programs for school-site Title IX Coordinators. There are no sample policies, no investigation toolkits, no posters letting students and staff know about Title IX and no guidance to help schools conduct a self-audit to determine if their students and staff really do know what gender-based discrimination means.

The reason for this situation is clear: at the moment, there is only one .25 FTE State Title IX Coordinator at the Oregon Department of Education overseeing Title IX enforcement and prevention of gender-based harassment and discrimination in all of our K-12 schools. It is completely unrealistic to think that one-quarter time of one person could lead to the kind of results that we want and need.

I ask that you support House Bill 2562. By funding two full-time State Title IX Coordinators, House Bill 2562 would enable Oregon to fulfill its Title IX mandate. This Bill is about protecting our children and grandchildren -- the next generation of Oregon's citizens and leaders.

Mary Pat Silveira
West Linn, Oregon