



October 20, 2026

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, Chair  
The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member  
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tim Wahlberg, Chair  
The Honorable Bobby Scott, Ranking Member  
Education & the Workforce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Chair  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chair  
The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Ranking Member  
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Comer, Chair  
The Honorable Robert Garcia, Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rand Paul, Chair  
The Honorable Gary Peters, Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Government Affairs  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cassidy, Ranking Member Sanders, Chair Wahlberg, Ranking Member Scott, Chair Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Comer, Ranking Member Garcia, Chair Paul, and Ranking Member Peters:

On behalf of the National Women's Law Center Action Fund and the 127 survivor advocate, civil rights, and education organizations below, we urge you to fulfill your Constitutional obligation to hold the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) accountable for its failure to enforce civil rights law and protect students from sexual violence.

Congress enacted Title IX in 1972 to ensure that all students can access educational opportunities free from sex discrimination, including sexual violence. This promise requires institutional accountability, trauma-informed processes, and federal investigations and enforcement when schools fail to address sexual violence and support survivors of all races, backgrounds, and genders. But OCR has abandoned this promise.

On February 23, 2025, more than 100 organizations sent a letter to Secretary of Education Linda McMahon and Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Kim Richey calling on OCR to fulfill its duties under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) by swiftly investigating and

equitably resolving complaints of sexual violence in education<sup>1</sup> Not only has there been no direct response to that letter, but OCR has continued to ignore its duties. Since taking office nearly two years ago, the Department of Education under the Trump administration has reached only one Title IX resolution agreement involving sexual violence.<sup>2</sup> In fact, instead of working to prevent and respond to discrimination based on sex—as is its Congressionally directed responsibility—the Department of Education has actively worked to remove civil rights enforcement from the agency entirely and has focused its limited resources on targeting and discriminating against transgender students.<sup>3</sup> OCR also recently announced a formal recodification of the 2020 Title IX rule issued under the first Trump administration that significantly weakened protections against sexual violence in education.<sup>4</sup> And now university leaders are deciding whether to de-prioritize addressing sex discrimination in schools.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, sexual violence in schools remains pervasive. From Mary Koss's landmark survey of college students in the mid-1980s<sup>6</sup> to the 2019 Association of American Universities Climate Survey,<sup>7</sup> the findings have been consistent for decades: more than 1 in 4 undergraduate women are sexually assaulted. Among girls aged 14-18, over 20% are kissed or touched without their consent.<sup>8</sup> Most of this violence is never reported. And as seen through the recent, horrific accounts from Cornell University<sup>9</sup> and Louisiana State University,<sup>10</sup> when schools do not respond appropriately, survivors are denied equal educational opportunities. Students, survivors, and advocates are exhausted and outraged to be dealing again with the epidemic of sexual violence in education with little accountability and little support for survivors.

We are counting on Congress to ensure Title IX's promise is fulfilled so that there is meaningful institutional accountability as well as trauma-informed processes that support survivors and federal investigations and enforcement when schools fail to address sexual violence against students of all races, backgrounds, and genders. We urge you to immediately take the following actions:

- (1) Compel the appearance of Secretary McMahon before your Committees to answer why the Department has taken almost no action to prevent and respond to sexual violence in schools, while dedicating limited resources to a political agenda to undermine the rights of transgender students by weaponizing Title IX;

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<sup>1</sup> [https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Letter-from-112-survivor-advocates-to-McMahon\\_Richey-re-Title-IX-1.pdf](https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Letter-from-112-survivor-advocates-to-McMahon_Richey-re-Title-IX-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://ocrcas.ed.gov/sites/default/files/ocr-letters-and-agreements/11205001-a.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/ed-and-doj-interagency-agreement-civil-rights-partnership-june-15-2026-114243.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/09/29/2026-19929/recodification-of-title-ix-rules>, see a comparison of the 2020 and 2024 rules: <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Biden-Title-IX-Rule-Chart-6.12.24-vF.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/10/06/us/politics/trump-cornell.html>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/09/what-surveys-dating-back-decades-reveal-about-date-rape/571330/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.aau.edu/resource-library/aau-campus-climate-survey-2019>

<sup>8</sup> [https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/final\\_nwlc\\_Gates\\_HarassmentViolence-1.pdf](https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/final_nwlc_Gates_HarassmentViolence-1.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cornellsun.com/article/2026/09/editorial-cornell-won-t-we-will>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/lsu-student-says-was-raped-football-player-still-team-rcna600539>

- (2) Prohibit and reverse the transfer of OCR functions from the Department of Education;
- (3) Call upon OCR to prioritize investigating and resolving outstanding Title IX complaints of sexual violence, and prohibit OCR from weaponizing Title IX to target schools with educational programs that are inclusive of transgender students; and
- (4) Call upon OCR to open directed investigations at Cornell University and Louisiana State University to, consistent with the law, determine whether students' civil rights were violated.

Every day that student survivors' complaints remain uninvestigated, they are forced to continue their education alongside those who harmed them, to miss class, to withdraw from programs, or to leave school entirely. Students do not have the luxury of waiting for federal inaction to resolve itself. A generation of student survivors are experiencing the derailment of their education—and their futures—in real time. The time is now, and Congress must act. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Shiwali Patel ([spatel@nwlc.org](mailto:spatel@nwlc.org)) and Elizabeth Tang ([etang@nwlc.org](mailto:etang@nwlc.org)) at the National Women's Law Center Action Fund.

Sincerely,

National Women's Law Center Action Fund

A Long Walk Home

Abortion Forward

Advocates for Trans Equality

AFT

All Above All

Alliance for Girls

Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Atheists

American Samoa Alliance against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Anthem of Us

Appleton Area NOW (WI)

Arab American Family Services

Arab American Institute

Association for Women in Science

Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice

Black Feminist Future

Brooklyn-Queens Chapter of the National Organization for Women

California National Organization for Women (CA NOW)

California Women's Law Center

Center for Children's Advocacy

Central NY National Organization for Women  
Central Oregon Coast NOW  
Charlottesville NOW (National Organization for Women)  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Collective Futures  
Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund  
ED OCR Alumni Collective  
EdTrust  
End Rape On Campus  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Equality Labs  
Feminist Majority  
FL National Organization for Women  
Florida Chapter National Organization for Women (FL NOW)  
Girls for Gender Equity  
Greater Orlando National Organization for Women  
Healthy Teen Network  
Human Rights Campaign  
Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Illinois National Organization for Women  
Indivisible Estacada  
Institute for Women's Policy Research  
International Union, United Auto Workers (UAW)  
It's On Us  
Just Solutions  
Know Your IX, a project of Advocates for Youth  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
Lawyers for Good Government  
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault  
Maine Women's Lobby  
Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Maryland NOW  
me too. International  
MomsRising  
Montana Chapter of the National Organization for Women  
NAACP

National Association of Social Workers  
National Black Women's Justice Institute (NBWJI)  
National Center for Youth Law  
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation/Black Women's Roundtable  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Education Association  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Organization for Women  
National Organization for Women - Connecticut Chapter  
National Organization for Women – Montgomery County, MD  
National Organization for Women - Morris County (NJ) Chapter  
National Organization for Women Clackamas County Oregon Chapter  
National Organization for Women, Columbia Area  
National Organization for Women, Hollywood Chapter  
National Organization for Women, Missouri  
National Organization for Women, NJ Chapter  
National Organization for Women, NYC  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Political Caucus  
NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence  
New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
North Carolina National Organization for Women (NC NOW)  
Northern New Jersey NOW  
NY State Now  
OAESV- Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence  
Our Family Coalition  
Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect  
PFLAG National  
Pinellas County National Organization for Women  
Pregnant Scholar at WorkLife Law  
Pride Community Center, Inc  
Public Counsel  
Public Justice  
Reproductive Freedom for All  
Resource Center  
Respect Together  
Rise Above Justice Movement  
Rochester NOW (National Organization for Women)  
Rocky Mountain Equality

Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center  
SafeBAE  
Sakhi for South Asian Survivors  
Secular Student Alliance  
Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA)  
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network  
Stop Sexual Assault in Schools  
The New York Women's Foundation  
Tulalip Office of Civil Legal Aid  
UltraViolet Action  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Victim Rights Law Center  
Virginia NOW  
Washington State Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence  
West Pinellas National Organization for Women  
West Volusia N.O.W. - FL0550  
Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Women's Law Project  
Women's March  
World Without Exploitation  
WV FREE  
YWCA USA