

Title IX Roundtable

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I am Coach Kim Russell, IWF Ambassador and advocate for women and girls. Women's sports have been my life and my passion. In college, I played two sports at the DI level, and I have been a women's lacrosse coach for 28 years. I have been inducted into three halls of fame for my contributions to the game of lacrosse and was recently appointed to the Women in Sports Commission for World Lacrosse (the governing body for the sport of lacrosse worldwide).

Many of my players affectionately refer to me as the "Hippie Love Coach," not only because I'm a yoga instructor, am often barefoot, read energy, and coach intuitively, but because I've given countless individuals a safe space to thrive and feel a sense of belonging. I've coached running down the sideline while nursing one child, with another in a backpack, while a third runs with me. I am a woman, through and through. Never in a million years did I think I would be sitting here at 56 years old—fighting to get back the rights that were given to women and girls almost 52 years ago.

When I accepted the job as Head Women's Lacrosse Coach & Wellness Instructor at Oberlin in August of 2018, I was so excited to be a part of an institution known for its academic rigor, open-minded dialogue, and freedom to express oneself.

And then, I learned the truth.

Oberlin—like many institutions of higher-ed these days—only supports free speech when your values align with theirs. I learned this first-hand when I spoke out against biological males competing in women's sports. As my kids say, "Mama, you've been canceled twice."

Canceled simply for saying **what federal law requires**: that women and men are entitled to equal athletic opportunities—**opportunities that are not possible without single-sex sport**.

The drafters of Title IX (and of its original implementing regulations) understood this basic point. Unfortunately, the current administration does not.

This spring, they are releasing new regulations that expressly contradict Title IX's statutory mandate, allowing trans-identifying males to take opportunities to compete away from women—to say nothing of trophies and awards.

Already, we are seeing schools use these proposed regulations as justification for squelching speech. They say that if, according to the Biden administration, keeping males off of women's teams violates Title IX, then protesting males on women's teams likewise violates the statute. ***In other words, in a sickly ironic twist, they claim that defending women's rights is itself a violation of a statute intended to grant women equal opportunities.***

Because schools are using these rules as a license to squash dissent, many will choose to stay silent. They do not want to be accused of sex discrimination or risk losing their jobs.

I will never apologize for believing that women and girls should have the right to single-sex competition. I'm hoping that my speaking up will give other coaches, administrators, faculty, parents, and athletes the courage to do the same.

At the very least, coaches and administrators must stop telling young women to stay silent and accept losing (or losing a spot) to a male. They must stop telling young women to accept having a fully intact male in their locker rooms.

Let's be honest about what is happening here: Young women are being groomed to accept discrimination, they are being groomed to compare their bodies to the bodies of hormonally impaired males, and they are being groomed to accept men in their private spaces. I ask you, "WHERE IS THE #METOO MOVEMENT NOW?"

You, Senators, have the opportunity to be heroes. This is about upholding truth, preserving the dreams of female athletes, and preserving the original meaning of Title IX. I hope you will act to do so.

Thank you.