

ADDRESS SEXUAL VIOLENCE AS A PROBLEM ON PREK-12 CAMPUSES & BRIDGE GAPS FOR MINORS

WHEREAS Title IX applies to prek-12 campuses as well as college campuses and while 1 in 5 college aged women are sexually assaulted, high schoolers report high numbers of assault and sexual violence, including sexual harassment, with trans students still at higher risk; and

WHEREAS Title IX applies to prek-12 campuses as it does all education levels, yet various education and political campaigns fail to address it, regardless of the investigations of prek-12 institutions currently underway by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and not counting the prek-12 survivors having been rejected their complaints. As of June 2018, there were 162 prek-12 schools under investigation by the OCR for mishandling sexual harassment and 137 for mishandling other forms of sexual violence; and

WHEREAS prek-12 survivors, like other survivors' face issues with trauma and knowledge of rights and how it affects our timeliness of filing OCR complaints within the given span of allotted time; and

WHEREAS younger prek-12 students face barriers in finding their Title IX guidance officer; and rates of sexual violence in high schools are only marginally lower and too face issues with hostile climates and retaliation from which they are protected under Title IX; and

WHEREAS prek-12 students face greater risk given that they face both student on student sexual violence and teacher on student sexual violence; and

WHEREAS ending sexual violence and sexual discrimination are priorities of NOW; and

WHEREAS prek-12 survivors face particular gaps in finding justice and advocacy. Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) do not educate or train staff in Title IX but deal with many Title IX challenges; and

WHEREAS there is very limited coordinated activity addressing PreK-12 sexual violence CACS do not communicate with state sexual violence coalitions or national organizations and state sexual violence coalitions which provide technical assistance, direct services and legal help to survivors often has an age limit which restricts minor survivors and the one organization that does address sexual violence for prek-12 students (Stop Sexual Assault in Schools) mainly addresses parents and teachers; and

WHEREAS National organizations who handle Title IX cases for college students often turn away minors and age limits are faced in dealing with survivors that alienate many minor survivors and prek-12 survivors do not face protections under the Clery Act; and

WHEREAS prek-12 Survivors are restricted by their knowledge of sexual violence and these definitions are provided by comprehensive sexual education and this is not provided to all students, but it should provide age appropriate information on reproductive rights and responsibilities as well as legal rights against sex discrimination; and

WHEREAS being minors, prek-12 survivors often face particular issues with expression and choice of action post-assault as they are subject to whether their parents and school officials believe them, and minors do not know their rights to take their own action should these individuals not believe them; and

WHEREAS Title IX is under attack and the Trump administration has repealed some Title IX guidance documents that address and prevent sexual harassment and violence;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the resolution that NOW will continue our mission to end sexual violence, protect women and children, and upholding supporting the success of Title IX to end gender-based violence by formally recognizing prek-12 sexual violence as a threat to gender equity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that thus forward, NOW will keep prek-12 survivors in mind in its actions, and fight for not only college aged survivors of sexual violence but those of prek-12 institutions as well; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED NOW will continue to support sexual violence prevention work and encourage work with local school districts in knowing that this work affects students in primary and secondary schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED NOW will be an ally for these survivors, fighting for legislation that will uphold protections for students and speaking out on unfair rulings and injustices against these students; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that NOW will continue to speak up for these survivors when they can't defend themselves and provide a platform for those that can.