Title IX: Friend or Foe to Gender Equality

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Title IX: Friend or Foe to Gender Equality
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Over thirty years ago, Senator Birch Bayh sponsored a federal statute (Title IX) to prohibit sex discrimination in our federally funded education programs. The far reaching effects of this statute are impacting individual lives on our campus today. On April 7, 2003 this statute was cited as a contributing factor in the decision to discontinue the men's track and field team, while continuing the woman's team. Compliance with this law touched the lives of twenty-nine student athletes in a profound and decisive way at Indiana Purdue Fort Wayne.

Last year alone, Title IX impacted over 2.5 million young females' decisions in part directing the important life choice of which university to attend. For athletes, the choice to play or not to play defines more than their biceps because life virtually revolves around their sport and their practice schedule. Also, Title IX influences women's health issues by contributing to a syndrome referred to as “the athletic triad.” As the United States faces an obesity epidemic, this statute is cited as a contributing factor in budget cuts resulting in decreases in physical education classes among high schools. In spite of the former secretary of Health and Human Services call to schools and universities to “reintroduce daily, quality, physical activity as a key component of comprehensive education,” the University of Toledo responded with the decision to eliminate loss of three athletic teams. In our nations' quest for “equality” and the “perfect body,” the Title IX controversy has widened the gap in finding balance and satisfaction in the athletic opportunities offered by educational institutions.