

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum on Strengthening Enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

June 17, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. As you might imagine, Hillary and I have looked forward to this day with great anticipation, and we have discussed these issues together for more than 25 years now. Actually, we met before title IX; that's one thing I managed to do without the benefit of Federal law. [Laughter]

I thank Secretary Riley for his wonderful leadership. And thank you, Anne, for your introduction. You did so well, if you ever get tired of science I think public affairs would treat you well. Thank you, Jackie, for being a wonderful role model and a great person. Thank you, Verelett Allen and Captain Robin Forster, Dr. Nelba Chavez. And I'd like to say a special thank you to Sally Ride and tell you that tomorrow is the 14th anniversary of her famous ride.

There are so many distinguished people in the audience I hesitate to start, but I would be remiss if I did not thank former Senator Birch Bayh for his leadership in this endeavor. Thank you, sir. You're a good man.

And I'd like to thank the eighth graders from the Thomas Edison Center for Technology who are here and I hope are being inspired about the future. And I would like to ask the members of the Congressional Women's Caucus who are here to stand and be recognized. All the Members of Congress who are here, please stand. Thank you.

We are here to celebrate title IX, but even more, we're here to celebrate the God-given talent of every woman and girl who has been benefited by it. Title IX did not create their successes, but it did give them the chance to make the most of their abilities. We have heard about the difference it has made in the lives of millions of young girls and young women. We know about the confidence that it has built, the expectations it has helped to set, the achievements it has helped to inspire.

Today I also want to say that in my view title IX has had a beneficial impact on every American citizen. If we've learned anything in the last 25 years since title IX became law, it is that expanding benefits and opportunities for any American helps the rest of us. Wasted opportunity diminishes all of us.

As we prepare for the 21st century, it would be sheer folly for us not to take advantage of every ounce of energy and talent and creativity every American has to offer. As a nation, that would be our great concern. Think what we would be like if there were no Sally Rides or Jackie Joyner-Kerseyes or any one of the countless women whose contributions have helped to make our Nation a better place, including, I might add, the eight women which now serve in the President's Cabinet, a record number.

Every girl growing up in America today should have the chance to become an astronaut or an Olympic athlete, a Cabinet Secretary or a Supreme Court Justice, a Nobel Prize winning scientist or President of the United States. For 25 years, title IX has helped girls to realize their dreams and to achieve them—a lot of people, believe it or not, still don't know this—to achieve them not only in athletics but in academics as well.

In addition to the remarkable athletic statistics, Secretary Riley told me today that—and Jackie—in 1972, there were 300,000 girls in high school athletics. Today, there are 2.3 million. But in addition to the athletics, listen to this, in 1972, 9 percent of the medical degrees and 7 percent of the law degrees were awarded to women. In 1996, 38 percent of the medical degrees and 43 percent of the law degrees were awarded to women.

So today we celebrate how far we've come. But we must also recommit ourselves to title IX's goal of equality in education, for too many schools and education programs still drag their feet and lag behind in their responsibility to our young women and girls.

Today I'm directing every agency and executive department of our Government to strengthen their enforcement of title IX within the next 90 days, by reviewing current procedures, consulting with the Attorney General on the best way to improve them, and delivering to me a new and vigorous enforcement plan. Every school and every education program that receives Federal assistance in the entire country must understand that complying with title IX

is not optional. It is the law, and the law must be enforced.

There is no question that we're better off because of title IX, but we can go even further to provide all people with the opportunity they deserve to make the most of their own lives. A lot of people don't know this, either, but currently title IX only applies to educational programs and activities that receive funding from the National Government. Ironically, it does not apply to the programs that the National Government runs itself. These include schools run by the Department of Defense, educational research conducted by the Federal Government, and educational fellowships awarded directly to students.

I believe and I surely hope that every American would agree that the National Government must hold itself to the same high standards it expects from everyone else, especially when it comes to discrimination in education. Therefore, today I have sent an executive memorandum to all the relevant Federal departments to conduct a review of their programs over the next 60 days, report the review to the Attorney General. And then after I receive her recommendation, I expect to sign an Executive order to prohibit educational discrimination on the basis of sex, race, or national origin in federally conducted education programs, thereby extending the principles of title IX to Federal programs themselves. [Applause] Thank you.

On the desk outside the Oval Office, there is a little sign with a quote from a woman who lives here in Washington. Here's what it says: "I rejoice in others' success, knowing there is plenty for us all." Today we are celebrating, resolving, and moving forward to make sure that all of our people, and especially every one of our girls and young women have the opportunities they deserve to make the most of their own lives. After all, there is plenty for us all. Indeed, I think you could make a compelling case that when other people succeed in a constructive manner it creates more opportunities for success for the rest of us.

Finally, let me just add one more item. There is something happening today that, like title IX, marks a significant step forward toward helping all our young people achieve their full potential. When I reached a bipartisan budget agreement with the leaders of Congress last month, one of my top goals was to extend health care coverage to millions more of our young children.

Believe it or not, 10 million children in this country still don't have health insurance, and more and more, a lot of employer-based health policies are not covering the whole family. It is no secret that this is something that Hillary and I have worked on for many years and care a great deal about.

I fought very hard to ensure that \$16 billion would be set aside in the budget agreement for this purpose. But we did not prescribe in the agreement how this money would be spent. The important thing is to use it wisely and carefully so that it provides meaningful coverage to as many children as possible. I am very pleased that a bipartisan group of Senators in the United States Senate and on the Finance Committee have come up with some children's legislation that I believe offers that promise.

So today I am proud to say that I will endorse the legislation sponsored by Senators Chafee, Rockefeller, Jeffords, and Hatch. The Senate Finance Committee is voting on it today, and it will help to give a lot of our young children a healthy start in life, without which a lot of those young girls might not ever be in a position to take advantage of title IX.

This legislation will be the biggest investment in children's health care since Medicaid passed in 1965. It will be the most significant thing that we could do, I think, by committing us to providing health insurance coverage to up to 5 million uninsured children in providing health insurance today that they didn't have yesterday.

So, we've got a chance once again to prove that if we'll put politics aside and work together as we did so many years ago in the cause of civil rights, as we celebrate today with title IX, we can make America a better place.

Thank you for being here today. Thank you for the examples you set every day, and resolve tomorrow that you will give another young woman or girl a chance to make the most of her God-given abilities. Thank you very much.

[At this point, the President signed the memorandum to the heads of executive departments and agencies.]

The President. Thank you. Thanks for coming.

NOTE. The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to scientist Anne Jarvis Jefferson, who introduced the President; athlete

Jackie Joyner-Kersey; Verelett Allen, coordinator, YWCA/HCCCE Non-Traditional Employment for Women Program; Robin Forster, fire captain, Station 10, Parkville, MD; Dr. Nelba Chavez, Administrator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration; and former astronaut Sally K. Ride. He also referred to title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Public Law 92-318).

Memorandum on Strengthening Title IX Enforcement and Addressing Discrimination on the Basis of Sex, Race, Color, and National Origin

June 17, 1997

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Strengthening Title IX Enforcement and Addressing Discrimination on the Basis of Sex, Race, Color, and National Origin in Federally Conducted Education Programs and Activities

As we commemorate the 25th anniversary of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, we should pause to recognize the significant progress our Nation has made in increasing educational possibilities for women and girls and recommit ourselves to the goals of this important legislation. Title IX has broken down barriers and expanded opportunities—opening classroom doors, playing fields, and even the frontiers of space to women and girls across this country.

My Administration is working hard to expand further opportunities for women and girls. We have stepped up enforcement of civil rights statutes in areas such as access to advanced math and science programs. We have issued policy guidance on racial and sexual harassment and on ensuring equal opportunities in intercollegiate athletics. We have aggressively litigated cases presenting significant issues of discrimination, including cases challenging the exclusion of women from the Virginia Military Institute and the Citadel. My Administration has also sponsored an education campaign to help young girls build skills, confidence, and good health. Finally, my Administration has reaped the benefits of an ever-increasing pool of superbly qualified women, making it possible for me to appoint record numbers of women to my Cabinet, judicial posts, and to high levels of decision-making throughout the Federal Government.

Yet more needs to be done. Our Nation can reach its full potential only when all of our citizens have the opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to our society. Today, I am announcing two important next steps in our fight to reach true equality in education.

First, I am directing executive departments and agencies to develop vigorous, new Title IX enforcement plans. We must ensure that all Federal agencies that provide financial assistance to education programs or activities take all necessary steps to ensure that programs and institutions receiving Federal money do not discriminate on the basis of sex.

I therefore direct all heads of executive departments and agencies that provide financial assistance to education programs or activities, following consultation with the Attorney General, to report to me within 90 days on measures to ensure effective enforcement of Title IX. This should include a description of department or agency priorities for enforcement, methods to make recipients of Federal financial assistance aware of their obligation not to discriminate, and grievance procedures to handle Title IX complaints. In accordance with Executive Order 12250, the Attorney General should coordinate implementation of these measures.

Second, I am asking executive departments and agencies to take appropriate action against discrimination in education programs or activities conducted by the Federal Government. Currently, Title IX generally prohibits discrimination based on sex—and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 generally prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin—in education programs or activities that *receive* Federal financial assistance. However, these laws do not apply to comparable education programs or activities that are *conducted* by the