Introduction:
The Feminism of Title IX

_Title IX._ Those two words were blazoned on the bare backs of the members of the Yale University women’s crew team as they stood in the office of the athletic director in 1976. The women standing in that office had had enough. Although Title IX—a federal law banning sex discrimination in federally funded education programs—had been enacted four years earlier, it had yet to make a real difference in their lives. They endured appalling and humiliating conditions for the privilege of rowing for Yale, including restricted access to facilities, meager funding, and grossly unequal treatment compared to the male rowers. After each practice, in the bitter cold winters of Connecticut, they waited in their wet sweat suits on the freezing bus while the men took hot showers and dressed in the boathouse because the only bathroom and shower facilities at the river were reserved for men. Waiting on the bus, wet and cold, the women hatched a plan.

On a cold day in early spring, the women called the _New York Times_ and alerted a reporter that there would be a protest in the office of the Yale athletic director. On the announced day, nineteen members of the women’s rowing team walked into the A.D.’s office, stripped off their sweats, and revealed the words “Title IX” written across their bare backs and chests. Then they read a three-hundred-word explanation that included the following statement: “These are the bodies that Yale is exploiting. On a day like today, the ice freezes on this skin. And we sit for a half hour, as the ice melts and soaks through to meet the sweat that is soaking us from the inside.”1 To Yale’s chagrin, the protest made national news. The women’s crew team soon had access to showers and better facilities.2

The crux of their protest was these two simple words: _Title IX._ At the time, those words were little known among nonlawyers, beyond the few aficionados who followed women’s sports. Today, appeals to Title IX resonate broadly in American popular culture. Media coverage of every Olympics since 1996
has included frequent mention of Title IX and glowing statements attributing the success of female Olympians to the opportunities created by the law. Appeals to the sentiment behind the law, that women should have equal access to sports, help sell Nike shoes and have figured prominently in the company’s advertising campaigns. A women’s clothing catalogue titled simply “Title Nine” markets sportswear and casual clothing to active women. The statute has even influenced the characters and story lines on our viewing screens in television shows and movies. Title IX has worked its way into American popular culture as few other laws have.

And yet, for all of its influence, it is a law that is little understood. Critics blame it for going too far and hurting men’s sports, calling it a “quota” law. As explained in later chapters, it is not. Even the law’s supporters do not always grasp its requirements. Popular newspaper accounts often describe Title IX as a law that mandates equal funding for male and female sports. This, too, is inaccurate. It is a law that means many things to many people, but it is rarely fully understood or appreciated, despite its fame and notoriety. And, for all of its impact on women’s equality—in sports and in society—it is a law that has been too often neglected in feminist scholarship examining the role of law in shaping understandings of gender and producing cultural change.

This is a book about Title IX. It explores how and why it has been more successful than other sex discrimination laws, at least in certain respects, in getting women into arenas traditionally reserved for men and in changing cultural norms in the process. It also examines those areas of the law where progress has been disappointing and where the law has developed in a constricted or ineffectual way.

More indirectly, it is also a book about feminist approaches to law and gender inequality. Feminist legal theory is a helpful tool for understanding the successes and limitations of Title IX as a vehicle for social change. Title IX is a “feminist” law in the sense that it is animated by a desire to enable women to live more full and meaningful lives, without the stifling constraints of gender roles and discrimination. And yet, for the most part, feminist legal scholarship has not given Title IX its due. This book represents one effort to fill that void.

*Feminism’s Neglect of Sport*

For the most part, feminist legal scholarship has ignored or marginalized sport. This has changed to some extent in the past decade, but in comparison to the attention devoted to women’s equality in other aspects of women’s lives, sport has been sorely neglected.
The divide separating feminist legal theory from advocates for girls and women in sport has a certain logic to it. Feminist theory, like many other academic disciplines, has been influenced by Western philosophy, which treats the mind and the body as occupying opposite points on the spectrum of personhood. Western philosophy has long marginalized the body as the opposite of, and separate from, reason. Susan Bordo, one of a relatively small group of feminist philosophers who study the body and its role in shaping gender inequality, has observed that classical philosophy views the body as an obstacle to reasoning, since the body is rooted in a particular space and time, unlike thought and ideas, which (supposedly) descend from abstract principles of truth. This mind/body divide is further polarized by a gender dichotomy that associates the body with women and reason with men. As Professor Bordo explains, the construction of “the body” as female stems in part from the linkage between human bodies and women’s traditional roles—having babies, having sexual relationships with men, and caring for the bodily needs of children and family. Men’s traditional roles, on the other hand, link up more closely with the life of the mind.

Given the aspersions Western thought casts on the body and the role of gender in creating a mind/body hierarchy, it is not surprising that feminist theorists have sought to downplay the importance of the body in feminist projects. A major focus of the feminist movement has been to bring women into the life of the mind as full equals. Accordingly, feminist law-related projects have given top priority to furthering gender equality in economic, civic, and political life.

This is not to say that feminism has ignored the role that men’s and women’s bodies play in the subordination of women. Much feminist scholarship addresses issues of gender inequality in which the body plays a visibly central role, including abortion, rape, pregnancy, and childbirth. However, in these areas, the female body is the object of victimization, oppression, unique burdens, or disparagement. Feminist analysis of these topics has sought to reframe the focus away from women’s bodies and onto the disparities in social and political power that oppress women.

In a similarly guarded stance, feminist theory downplays the significance of the body in explaining gender inequality in economic and political life. Apologists for women’s subordination have pointed to “natural” and biologically based differences rooted in men’s and women’s bodies. In response, much feminist legal scholarship has a social constructionist bent, minimizing the significance of the body and exposing the many ways in which society and institutions create and maintain gender inequality. Instead of regarding
the female body as a source of strength, empowerment, and identity, feminist theory has kept more of an arm’s-length relationship to the body, minimizing its significance in larger gender equality struggles.15

Given this history, it is not surprising that sport has taken a back seat to other feminist projects. In the mind/body duality, sport is firmly on the side of the body. It is a largely physical domain in which active bodies figure prominently. Emphasizing the significance of sport and justifying it as an important subject for feminist attention require believing in the potential for women’s bodies to become a source of positive identity and individual empowerment. They also require overcoming any feminist ambivalence about sport and its role in society. Skeptics might view sport as such a thoroughly masculinized institution, celebrating brute force and the physical domination of others, that there is little left to salvage for women. Throw in Western culture’s disparagement of physical pursuits in favor of rationality, and feminism’s prioritizing of the pursuit of equality for women in the workplace and political and civic arenas seems predictable, if not inevitable.

Feminism’s neglect of sport is not entirely one-sided. Many, and perhaps most, female athletes do not self-identify as feminists and do not perceive themselves as signing onto a feminist agenda when they play sports. Women’s sports advocates work at the periphery of the feminist movement, and many of the athletes and fans who benefit from their work show little interest in broader feminist projects.16 The reasons for this divide are complicated, but surely it is influenced by the cultural contradictions triggered by women’s participation in a traditionally masculine endeavor such as sport. If playing sports—especially playing masculine sports and playing them well—threatens to compromise women’s culturally valued femininity, disavowing feminism can help women athletes reclaim a more acceptable feminine identity. Scholars like Mary Jo Kane have termed this phenomenon “the female apologetic” in which female athletes go out of their way to provide reassurances of their femininity.17

Whatever the reasons for the breach between feminist legal theory and the women in sport movement, it is time to move gender equality in this arena to a more central place in a feminist agenda. In recent years, some feminist scholars have started down that path. Among them, the feminist sport scholars Shirley Castelnuovo and Sharon Guthrie have called for feminist theory to bridge the mind/body chasm, arguing that women’s physical liberation is a necessary step to full gender equality.18 Their approach advocates a mix of feminist strategies as applied to sport, the incorporation of liberal feminism’s emphasis on full inclusion, radical feminism’s scrutiny of how physical sub-
ordination maintains male dominance, and postmodern feminism’s insights into the constructed nature of the body. As sketched out later in this chapter, Title IX follows this prescription to some extent, taking a blended theoretical approach that draws from various strands of feminist theory to craft a hybrid, compromise model for regulating sex discrimination in sports.

In writing this book, I hope to raise the prominence of Title IX as a feminist legal issue and to contribute to a greater understanding and appreciation of the law—while keeping a critical eye on its shortcomings. As a feminist legal scholar, I am especially interested in the role that Title IX can play in furthering gender equality in sport and in society more broadly. But, before turning to Title IX, it is worth surveying the potential benefits of sport in women’s lives and the case for making sex equality in sport a high priority.

The Feminism of Sport: Empowering Women and Transforming Cultural Norms

At some point during adolescence, most girls learn to hate their bodies. Their bodies become a source of embarrassment, and girls begin to position themselves to take up less space. They fold their arms over their chests, cross their legs, and sink into their shoulders. As many parents of teen and pre-teen daughters will attest, girls at this age seem painfully unsure of themselves. They go from being uninhibited explorers of the world to self-conscious critics of themselves. They fixate on their looks and bemoan what they perceive as being wrong with their bodies, measured by impossible and idealized cultural standards. By some estimates, 40 percent of girls have dieted by the time they reach the fourth grade.

Sport can be a powerful antidote to the self-abnegating relationship so many girls develop to their bodies. The ethnographer and scholar Jane Gran-skog has found, in studying women’s life histories, that sport is “a creative force in the development of identity,” providing a path to “embodied knowledge.” Participating in sport helps women reconnect with their bodies as a source of empowerment. Women who develop athletic competence as girls are better prepared both psychologically and physically to counter the cultural forces that turn women’s bodies into objects that exist for the use and pleasure of others. By developing athletic skills and interests as girls, women can use sport as a way to cope with stress as they progress through the stages of life and navigate the competing demands of adulthood.

At its best, sport teaches important life skills. Through sport, girls learn to assert themselves but also to rely on others and to allow others to rely on
them. They learn what they have control over and what they do not and practice deciding what to do about it. They develop self-reliance and learn how to reconcile it with teamwork. Sport also teaches a less-appreciated skill—how to recover from loss and disappointment, by regrouping, revising one's goals, and rededicating oneself to meet them. Athletics can play an important role in developing girls’ leadership skills, both on and off the field.

The benefits of sport to girls are well documented. They include enhanced self-esteem and feelings of self-worth, a lower incidence of depression and anxiety, greater physical health, including a lower risk of childhood obesity and a multitude of health benefits that extend into adulthood, and a reduced risk of suicide. Female sports participation is also associated with higher academic achievement and better social relationships with peers. There is even evidence that girls’ participation in high school sports translates into labor market gains when they enter the workforce, including higher pay and a greater likelihood of obtaining high-skilled work in traditionally male occupations.

Participating in women’s sports also furthers the development of stronger social bonds among women. Especially in team sports, athletes develop a collective identity in which they are appreciated both as individuals and as members of the team. The relationships that form can be a source of empowerment and community throughout women’s lives. Sports participation empowers women as individuals, while at the same time promoting a strong and positive identity in being a woman, in affinity with other women.

In addition to benefiting women at an individual level, girls’ and women’s participation in sports also yields societal benefits. Whether or not female athletes think of it in these terms, playing sports disrupts traditional understandings of gender. Strong, athletic women expose the myth that women’s bodies are “naturally” weak. They show that there is a range of body types and abilities and that these are not neatly categorized in a gender hierarchy that associates men with physical strength and women with physical weakness. With the increasingly high levels of performance by elite female athletes, the gender gap in athletic performance has substantially narrowed. Women’s athletic performance more closely tracks that of male athletes than many people realize, especially when differences in physical size are accounted for. For example, when the 7.5-inch height difference between Florence Griffith Joyner and Carl Lewis is taken into account, Joyner ran at a relative velocity .28 seconds faster per inch of height than that achieved by Lewis. Likewise, top female swimmers outswim men when height differences are accounted for. And, in endurance events like long-distance cycling, women have broken men's records.
Girls’ increasing participation in sport and the slow but steady upsurge in cultural support for it have shifted the cultural norms of girlhood. Adults of a certain age will remember a time, not so terribly long ago, when a girl who was good at sports was something of a cultural outcast. She was a “tomboy,” or, worse, a “freak,” maybe even a “dyke.” Girls today, however, are growing up in a very different world. Increasingly, success in sports is a source of popularity for girls as well as boys, putting them on a path to higher social status. The ideal of femininity itself has shifted from one that values quiet passivity to one that applauds strength, confidence, and athletic prowess. As the feminist sport scholars Leslie Heywood and Shari Dworkin have observed, these cultural changes have opened up more space for highly regarded, strong, athletic women. They laud the “the newly iconic image of the female athlete” as one that pushes back against simplistic media depictions of essential gender difference and passive, objectified images of women.

As more and more women succeed in sport, the very meaning of gender and the understanding of what it means to be male or female is transformed. The feminist philosopher Judith Butler argues that women’s participation in sport “troubles” simplistic understandings of gender, revealing gender to be more “performance” than biology. As she explains, the increasing cultural acceptance of high-performing, “masculine” women athletes “not only expands the field of play, allowing greater participation, but it allows the category of ‘woman’ to become a limit to be surpassed, and establishes sports as a distinctively public way in which to enact and witness that dramatic transformation.” Butler uses the example of public reaction to Martina Navratilova in the 1970s and 1980s to illustrate the cultural changes that have occurred. Early reactions to Martina Navratilova depicted her as a freak, a man masquerading as a woman, not a “real” woman at all. By the 1990s, that understanding was replaced by a deep appreciation for her as an athlete and a role model. As a strong, unapologetic female athlete who, at the time, exhibited an unprecedented level of performance, Navratilova at the beginning of her career presented an image of gender that was unrecognizable under prevailing cultural understandings, provoking public wrath and ridicule. As cultural norms shifted over time, she became accepted and even celebrated, with the result that the field for being a “woman” expanded. In this sense, women’s sports participation has revolutionized understandings of gender and the cultural constraints under which women live their lives.

For all of these reasons, female athletes participate in a feminist agenda even if they do not embrace the label. The movement for sex equality in sport has the potential to revitalize feminism, putting the “fun” back into the
movement and appealing to a younger generation of women. Heywood and Dworkin aptly describe sport as “stealth feminism” because it promotes and capitalizes on a feminist agenda without getting hung up on who does or does not sign onto the “feminist” label. Working for sex equality in sport should be a high priority for those of us concerned with using the law to improve women’s lives and build a society based on gender equality.

Title IX’s Many Feminisms: Exploring the Law’s Success and Its Limitations

Title IX stands out as a law that has had a transformative impact on the lives of girls and women and on society in general. It has escaped many of the pitfalls of other discrimination laws by employing measures of equality that are substantive and results oriented. As a feminist strategy, it is eclectic, representing a mix of various strands of feminist legal theory, rather than one unified theoretical approach. While some aspects of the law have been more forceful and effective than others, Title IX’s distinctive approach has enabled it to succeed in a way that other discrimination laws have not.

At one point or another in its application to sports, Title IX draws from several major strands of feminist legal theory. Feminist legal theory does not prescribe any singular approach to law but hosts a number of competing and sometimes complementary models for explaining and addressing gender inequality.

Liberal feminism dominated feminist legal analysis in the 1970s. Sometimes known by its critics as “formal equality,” liberal feminism presses for equal treatment on the same terms for men and women. Liberal feminists are critical of overblown claims of gender difference and adopt strategies that emphasize the relevant similarities between men and women. Liberal feminism seeks the rational treatment of individuals based on merit rather than on predefined gender roles. It promises the right to be treated as an equal, which is not necessarily the same thing as equality of results.

Some components of Title IX reflect liberal feminist strategies. Title IX’s equal-treatment standard, for example, discussed in chapter 6, requires male and female athletes to be treated equally within existing sport programs. It does not question the ways in which sport itself is structured to better suit men’s interests, nor does it scrutinize any imbalances in the numbers of men and women who benefit from sports. It defines equality in terms of equal treatment for those women who are already similarly situated to men by virtue of their position as athletes. Similarly, Title IX’s requirement of equal opportunity in athletic scholarship awards, also addressed in chapter 6, takes
a liberal feminist approach. Men and women who are similarly situated as varsity athletes are entitled to an equal share of athletic scholarship dollars. Finally, under limited circumstances, explained in chapter 2, Title IX promises individual female athletes the right to try out for a spot on the men's team. This, too, is a liberal feminist right. It is a right to a gender-blind try-out, not to a place on the team. The first two examples are group-based liberal feminist strategies, entitling female athletes as a group to equal treatment with male athletes. The third example, the right to try out for the other sex's team, applies liberal feminism at the individual level, promising individual women a gender-neutral, merit-based selection process. All three are examples of a liberal feminist approach that strives for the equal treatment of men and women without questioning the male-dominated structure of sports and without recognizing or accommodating the reasons men and women are differently situated in sport.

Liberal feminism has spawned a host of criticisms, and other schools of feminist legal theory have emerged with very different underpinnings. Some feminist scholars questioned liberal feminism's strategy of highlighting men's and women's similarities instead of recognizing and accommodating the ways in which men and women differ. These critics pressed for strategies that take into account men's and women's different circumstances by recognizing and accommodating gender differences where necessary to reach a substantively equal result.40

Critics of liberal feminism branched out into different feminisms of their own. Antisubordination theorists reframed the question from whether to minimize or accommodate sex difference to whether a particular law or practice operates to disadvantage or oppress women. Their core concern is how to expand women's social, political and economic power, and not necessarily the elimination of sex-based, differential treatment of individuals, or the adoption of accommodations to sex difference.41

Still another strand of feminist theory shared the criticisms of liberal feminism but disagreed with the antisubordination feminists' turn away from inquiring into gender difference. This strand of theory contends that women have distinctly gendered “voices” and experiences that deserve equal recognition and valuation. Known by a variety of terms, including “cultural feminism,” “relational feminism,” and “different voice” feminism, this approach emphasizes the high priority women place on caretaking and relationships with others, as distinct from men's more abstract and hierarchical approaches to justice. These scholars urge law and public policy to embrace and value women's distinctive interests, needs, and experiences equally with those of men.42
Title IX takes a page or more from both of these more substantive approaches to equality. By breaking from the liberal feminist sex-blind selection model that governs workplace discrimination law, Title IX recognizes and accommodates gender difference in sport through its allowance of sex-separate teams. Title IX permits men and women to have their own teams, representing a rejection of a pure liberal feminist model that spurns sex-based different treatment. Chapters 1 and 2 explore the balance Title IX strikes between accommodating and minimizing sex differences for purposes of team selection. Chapter 1 argues that Title IX does a respectable job overall of grappling with the dilemmas in this area and settling on a baseline of separation, while chapter 2 points out some important shortcomings in the liberal feminist integration rights the law does recognize. Despite its shortcomings, the result of Title IX’s sex-separate opportunity structure is a legal framework that opens the door to more creative, results-oriented measures for gender equality in a sex-segregated setting.

The biggest departure from liberal feminism—and the most successful equality measure, in terms of changing cultural norms—is Title IX’s three-part test for equal participation opportunities. This testconcertedly aims to expand girls’ and women’s sports participation, in recognition of their historic and continuing underrepresentation in sports. The specific requirements of this test are described in chapter 3, but the overall goal of the test is to increase girls’ and women’s opportunities in competitive sports. In terms of sheer numbers, this test has been wildly successful. As chapter 3 details, the number of girls and women who play varsity sports has skyrocketed in the years since Title IX was passed. This test charts a feminist path that rejects alleged gender differences as a justification for continuing disparities in sports opportunities and takes a skeptical view of the notion that men are inherently more interested in sports. Instead, the theory behind the three-part test turns the spotlight on the structures and cultures of sport that create gender inequality and rejects asserted gender difference in athletic interest as a justification for male privilege in sports. Both antisubordination and cultural feminisms are woven throughout the justifications for the three-part test, which is in many respects Title IX’s most important legacy. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 tell the story of Title IX’s three-part test and its effects and implications.

Title IX’s liberal feminist victories have been more measured. In particular, the equal-treatment standard has not lived up to its promise, considering the vast spending differentials that characterize men’s and women’s sports. Liberal feminism’s push for the gender-blind treatment of men and women has encountered difficulty as applied to a sex-segregated structure
that already recognizes sex difference as a basis for separating opportunities in the first place. Chapter 6 discusses the equal-treatment framework and its progress toward equalizing the treatment and benefits given to male and female athletes, as well as its limitations.

One of the litmus tests for a sex discrimination law is how it deals with the subject of pregnancy. Here, too, Title IX strikes a creative and pragmatic approach, reflecting both liberal feminism’s approach to pregnancy, which analogizes it to other medical conditions, and a more substantive equality that requires a specific, favorable accommodation for pregnancy regardless of how other conditions are treated. Although the topic of pregnant athletes has remained largely on the sidelines in Title IX discussions, recent media coverage of this issue in an ESPN report showcased the blatant discrimination that can block athletes who become pregnant from pursuing their athletic careers. This publicity resulted in a Title IX success story that reveals notable progress in changing the cultural norms surrounding women’s participation in sports. Chapter 7 takes up this issue and explains why a blended theoretical approach that draws from multiple feminist perspectives is preferable in this instance to a pure and singular theory.

While Title IX draws from liberal feminism, antisubordination, and cultural feminisms, it has been untouched by other developments in feminist theory. Postmodern feminist critiques have interrogated the category of “woman,” asking which women are implicitly included and which are implicitly excluded and exposing the instability of sex/gender itself as a category. Within postmodern feminist accounts, a critique of gender essentialism has emerged, challenging the primacy of gender in isolation as a tool for understanding and addressing oppression. Critical race feminists have shown that feminist approaches that fail to address racial injustice end up implicitly privileging white women. As is the case with other discrimination laws, Title IX has not absorbed these lessons, and the law’s successes have not equally benefited all women, an issue taken up in chapter 4.

Recently, feminist inquiry has turned to literature on masculinities, exploring the various ways in which men, too, are subordinated by gender systems and the variation among men in how gender privilege is distributed. This literature has demonstrated the existence of a wide range of masculinities, with race, class, sexual orientation, and other aspects of identity influencing how men experience gender. Feminist scholars have been especially interested in how hegemonic or traditionally dominant masculinity is developed and sustains gender hierarchy. Scholars of sport sociology have shown that sport plays a key role in teaching hegemonic masculinity and privileging it
over alternative masculinities. Unfortunately, Title IX’s approach to gender equality has made no serious attempt to expand the range of masculinities sport constructs, and it has failed to disrupt sport’s linkage to hegemonic masculinity. These limitations are discussed throughout the book and are highlighted in the Conclusion, which discusses the rift between men’s minor sports and women’s sports in debates over Title IX.

Overall, Title IX has had mixed results in its ventures beyond issues of equal access to sports and into the territory of challenging gender privilege in sports. Chapter 8 takes up three issues that bear on sex equality in sports beyond getting women into the game and providing equal support and benefits: the law’s protection from retaliation, the representation of women in coaching and athletic administration jobs, and the sexual harassment of female athletes by their coaches. Each of these issues triggers Title IX’s sex equality guarantee, but with varying levels of (modest) success.

A 2005 Supreme Court decision gave an important victory to a high school girls’ basketball coach who was fired after he spoke up for his athletes. That decision recognized that Title IX’s ban on sex discrimination implicitly encompasses protection from retaliation. The Court’s recognition of retaliation as a form of sex discrimination marks an important expansion of Title IX’s antidiscrimination principle to protect efforts to oppose and dismantle gender privilege in sports. However, so far, the law has not yet followed through on the full implications of this insight, and it remains to be seen whether the scope of the law’s protection from retaliation will be sufficient to enable Title IX to fulfill its promise as an effective remedy to gender discrimination.

The remaining two issues taken up in chapter 8 suggest that there is less cause for optimism about Title IX as a tool for dismantling gender privilege. First, women’s share of coaching jobs has plummeted since Title IX was passed, and the law’s gender-blind, liberal feminist approach to employment discrimination does not view this as a problem of gender inequality at all. Second, Title IX is at its weakest when it comes to addressing one particular form of gender privilege in sport: sexual harassment of female athletes by their coaches. Sexual-harassment law is a creature of antisubordination feminism, but Title IX does much worse than other sex-discrimination laws in translating the insights of antisubordination feminism into legal doctrine in this area. This chapter reminds us that much work remains to be done before Title IX can fulfill its potential as a legal tool for social change.

The book concludes by considering a phenomenon that plagues all progressive projects—the law’s ability to navigate and survive the inevitable
backlash. Title IX is no stranger to backlash. An anti-Title IX movement has been in the works ever since the law was first enacted. It gained momentum in the past decade and a half as the courts stepped up the law’s enforcement. So far, the backlash has had limited influence; a 2005 Department of Education policy revision, for example, threatens to water down Title IX’s test for equal participation opportunities. However, all things considered, the bigger story is how little the backlash has accomplished. Despite favorable political conditions and, for many years, leaders in both the White House and Congress who shared an agenda to undermine the law, Title IX’s toughest and most effective standards have proven resilient to attacks by critics and efforts to undermine them.

Title IX has remained a remarkably popular law precisely because it has been so effective in changing cultural norms to support greater opportunities for girls and women in sports. Too many parents have seen their daughters benefit from sports to turn back the clock now, even if it means their sons have to share the athletic pie. This rising level of support and appreciation for girls and women in sport has marked a revolution in the game, with spillover effects on gender relations in the broader society. With such a legacy, Title IX deserves its place as an iconic law in American culture.