



CALIFORNIA  
WOMEN'S  
LAW CENTER

FAIR PLAY FOR GIRLS IN SPORTS:  
A PROJECT OF CWLC

BRIEF OVERVIEW

# Fair Play for Girls in Sports

A project of the California Women's Law Center

# DID YOU KNOW?

## Progress

Prior to Title IX, fewer than 300,000 girls competed in high school sports; now approximately **3.5 million girls play sports**.

California was the first state to enact a law requiring gender equity in local parks and recreation athletics.

## Education

Overall, young women who play sports have higher grades and score higher on standardized tests than their non-athlete peers.

Black female athletes are **15% more likely to graduate from college** compared to their non-athletic peers.

Latina female students who play sports are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college than those not playing sports.

## Health

Girls/women who had the highest levels of physical activity during adolescence and young adulthood were **20% less likely to get breast cancer** later in life.

Women and girls who participate in regular exercise experience lower rates of depression.

## Employment

Girls who play sports in high school go on to **earn 7% higher annual wages** than their non-athlete peers.

Title IX directly increased women's participation in the labor force, while opening paths to higher-skill, previously male-dominated positions.



## IN HER OWN WORDS

Playing softball has helped me in school. If I didn't play sports, I'm not sure that I would have the drive to stay in school and pursue a career. Playing softball helps me to set my priorities regarding my grades, not only for myself but for my team."

**Veronica Ollier**

*California high school student*

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## What Is Title IX?

Title IX, a federal law passed in 1972, gives female athletes the right to participate equally in sports in public schools, including elementary, middle, and high schools, colleges and universities.



**Example:** At the local public high school, the number of team slots and the quality of facilities, uniforms, scheduling and coaching must be equal for girls; tight budgets are no excuse for inequality.

## What Is AB 2404, California Government Code Section 53080?

AB 2404, California Government Code Section 53080 (also known as the Fair Play in Community Sports Act, or Fair Play Act), is a California law passed in 2004, requiring equity in local youth athletics, such as sports programs run by your parks and recreation department. The law is much like Title IX in calling for equal athletic opportunities, facilities, publicity, and more.



**Example:** Where park and recreation departments allow boys' baseball and girls' softball to use local parks, allocated field space must be equitable. This mandate includes the quality of lighting, dugouts, and storage space for equipment.



# WHAT WE DO

## Our Mission

Ensure all girls—regardless of race, income level, and geography—receive equitable opportunities, treatment, and benefits in athletics available from schools and parks and recreation programs.

## Education

Give Presentations, Workshops & Trainings on Title IX and AB 2404 for:

- Girls and Youth
- Parents, Guardians, and Families
- Coaches
- Parks and Recreation Departments
- K-12 Schools
- Community Organizations
- Youth Advocates, Mentors & Teachers

## Technical Assistance

Assess schools and parks and recreation departments to help them implement Title IX and AB 2404 and ensure equality.

## Strategic Litigation

When necessary, represent clients in court to enforce the law where girls lack equal opportunities.

Ensuring equality in athletics for girls in California.



The mission of California Women's Law Center is to create a more just and equitable society by breaking down barriers and advancing the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education.

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\*Note, while this material and work focus on youth identifying as girls, California Women's Law Center (CWLC) supports equitable athletic access for all youth regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, socioeconomics, ability, and more. CWLC notes the drafters' binary approach and language in laws covered in these materials and further underscores the importance of ensuring inclusive, equitable, welcoming, and safe environments for all youth.

Thank you to all who contributed to CWLC's Fair Play materials, including Goodwin Procter LLP.



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## CONTACT US!

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