

It has been 37 years since the passage of Title IX into law, prohibiting gender discrimination in federally funded educational programs. We have made great strides since then—opportunities for girls and women to participate in sports and athletics have become increasingly available. There are countless achievements of women and girls in sports over the last 37 years to be celebrated.

But while we have come far, young women are still underrepresented in high school sports. [More after the jump.](#)

Despite making up half of the high school population, girls only receive 41% of all athletic participation opportunities. Young women have 1.3 million fewer opportunities to play high school sports than young men, and the gap is increasing.

The benefits of playing sports in school are clear—studies show that student athletes graduate at higher rates, perform better in school and are less likely to use drugs and alcohol. Studies have proven that athletic females are more self-confident, have better self-image, and lower levels of depression—critical attributes that will help them succeed throughout their lives.

Sports bring confidence and camaraderie to young women, but those benefits are lost if schools never offer girls the choice to play.

Under current law, colleges and universities are required to disclose any data on equity in sports. High schools are not required to disclose this information, which makes it difficult for parents and other watchdog groups to ensure fairness in their athletics programs.

It's my hope that the White House will support my legislation, H.R. 2882, the High School Athletics Accountability Act of 2009, which would require school districts to disclose the number of female and male students participating in their athletic programs and what they spend on boys and girls sports. Only with full transparency can we be sure that everyone is getting the same opportunity.

We must give our schools the tools they need to identify inequities in their sports programs so that current and future generations of women can enjoy the benefits of athletics. We must continue to protect the rights our nation's young women deserve. And especially today, on the anniversary of Title IX, we need to reaffirm our commitment to equality – whether it's in the workplace, the classroom or the sports field or gym.