



Founded in 1998, Maine Boys to Men engages communities to shift attitudes and actions to end male violence against women. Our programs bring boys, girls, men, and women together to work as allies to challenge the cultural norms that lead to horrific levels of injustice and gender-based violence. Youth and adults who complete our programs leave with the skills to confront and challenge the underlying attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that lead up to, and contribute toward a culture of violence.

Maine Boys to Men opposes the proposed changes to Title IX, which threaten the safety of students while attending school. We believe that all students deserve access to an education free from violence and reject the proposed changes to Title IX, for we believe they will increase rates of sexual violence on college campuses and reduce the likelihood of survivors seeking support.

In addition to creating additional burdens for survivors, the proposed guidelines inappropriately strengthen the rights of named harassers. While ensuring fair process for both parties is critical, this puts further imbalance on an already unjust system. Specifically, under proposed changes to Title IX guidelines, students accused of sexual harassment can now claim sex discrimination if a school opens an investigation into their conduct.

For a variety of reasons, sexual assaults are already one of the most underreported crimes. The new guidelines will add further considerations for those who have been sexually assaulted as they weigh the probability of enduring additional trauma by reporting. If we continue to protect perpetrators, we risk an increased amount of silence among future survivors.

Let us hold ourselves to a higher degree of accountability.

Under current Title IX legislation, 1 in 5 female students are victims of sexual assault in their lifetime (NSVRC, 2015) and over 80% of student victims of sexual assault do not report the event to police (Sinozich & Langton, 2014). Among undergraduate college students, 23.1% of females and 5.4% of males experience rape or sexual assault through physical force, violence, or incapacitation. Male victims are 78% more likely than non-students to be a victim of sexual assault (RAINN, 2019). Under the proposed title IX changes, we may see the number of unreported sexual assaults rise even closer to 100%, ultimately causing increased harm over generations. The reported economic impacts of rape are staggering, costing the U.S. over \$127 Billion annually (NSVRC, 2015). It is clear that creating barriers for survivors will only exacerbate these impacts and could result in an increasing loss of educated students to enter the workforce and contribute to economic productivity.

This proposed change reinforces a false narrative that by speaking up, survivors are ruining young men's lives. The proposed changes place significantly increased focus on the potential harm to perpetrators and shifts attention away from the needs of the survivor.

Maine Boys to Men is against Title IX reform as the proposed changes will make schools less safe for survivors and increase rates of sexual assault on college campuses. Those accused of sexual assault do not need increased protection. Survivors of sexual assault do.

Changes to Title IX addressing protections for the accused would seem reasonable if the number of falsely accused perpetrators were anywhere near the number of individuals experiencing assault. In fact, the rate of false accusations is very low, relative to levels of victimization (Langton & Berzofsky, 2012). Studies show the actual number of false accusations is between 2% and 10%, according to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2012).

It is time to stop making excuses for and protecting men who commit sexual assault. We have an opportunity to change this culture of violence against women by standing in support of survivors. We stand with current and future survivors of sexual assault in rejection of the revised guidelines that bring us in the opposite direction.

## References

- Langton, L., Berzofsky, M. (August, 2012). Victimization Not Reported to the Police, 2006 – 2010 [PDF]. *Bureau of Justice Statistics*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/vnrrp0610.pdf>
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC). (2012). False Reporting [PDF]. Retrieved from: [https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/2012-03/Publications\\_NSVRC\\_Overview\\_False-Reporting.pdf](https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/2012-03/Publications_NSVRC_Overview_False-Reporting.pdf)
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC). (2015). Statistics about sexual violence [PDF]. Retrieved from: [https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications\\_nsvrc\\_factsheet\\_media-packet\\_statistics-about-sexual-violence\\_0.pdf](https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_factsheet_media-packet_statistics-about-sexual-violence_0.pdf).
- Sinozich, S., & Langton, L. (December, 2014). Rape and Sexual Assault victimization Among College-Age Females, 1995 – 2013 [PDF]. *Bureau of Justice Statistics*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rsavcaf9513.pdf>