

# FEMINIST MAJORITY FOUNDATION

January 8, 2021

Linda Darling-Hammond, Director of the Biden-Harris Education Transition Team and the Transition Team

Dear Dr. Darling-Hammond and the Department of Education Transition Team,

The undersigned organizations, all of whom support greatly increased attention to educational equity, recommend that the Biden-Harris Department of Education (ED) prioritize establishing an Office for Gender Equity reporting to the Secretary of Education as soon as possible. This Office is the first priority in a longer [letter](#) sent to the transition teams by the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education.

Creation of an Office for Gender Equity is critical in restoring and ensuring opportunity, safety, and gender equity in education particularly as the Department of Education rectifies the 2020 changes to the Title IX Regulations and withdrawal of important Guidance documents by the Trump Administration and as it advances initiatives to ensure educational opportunity for all. The Office for Gender Equity is immediately needed to obtain public input on revising the Title IX regulations relating to sexual harassment and assault and other rescinded guidance on transgender individuals and Title IX Coordinators. It is also crucial that the new Biden-Harris Department of Education show proactive gender equity leadership to help establish an effective national infrastructure of Title IX Coordinators and other gender equity experts to implement full eradication of long-standing sex discrimination with attention to compounded discrimination based on race, disability, English Language Learners, immigration, pregnancy/parenting, and LGBTQ status in education. An Office for Gender Equity is also needed to coordinate policy and make high quality gender equity resources including research, policies, training, and student materials available to the public by re-establishing a Gender Equity Web-based Resource Center to serve all levels from pre-k to higher and adult education.

We recommend that the Department create the Office for Gender Equity administratively, with its Director reporting to the Secretary of Education. This office is also proposed in the Gender Equity Education Act (GEEA), and a Special Assistant for Gender Equity was authorized in the Department of Education Organization Act. A proactive ED Office for Gender Equity would also complement the parallel offices charged with leadership and coordination on gender issues in federal health agencies, Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of State.

The gender equity community has been a long-time supporter of the GEEA and its predecessor, the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA), which was the only federal legislation specifically focused on implementing Title IX. The current version of GEEA--the Patsy T. Mink and Louise K. Slaughter Gender Equity Education Act of 2019-20

(S. 1964, HR 3513) sponsored by Senator Mazie Hirono and Representative Doris Matsui outlines the many responsibilities of the Office, such as policy making, training, dissemination, and federal coordination within ED as well as with other government offices. It also emphasizes the need for intersectional approaches to gender and other civil rights protections.

Hopefully, when the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress passes GEEA, the existing Office for Gender Equity would assume responsibility for implementing the GEEA grants program to expand the necessary gender equity infrastructure, including well-trained Title IX Coordinators and gender equity experts. As appropriate, the Office for Gender Equity would also be home for other legislative gender equity programs, dealing with sexual harassment and assault, STEM, athletics and of course it would coordinate closely with the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and White House equity initiatives.

Establishing an Office for Gender Equity at the beginning of the Biden-Harris Administration is an important and unmistakable signal of support for gender equity leadership. It gives the Biden-Harris Administration a head start on strengthening the Department's capacity to address gender equity and will be an important asset in securing passage and needed implementation funding for GEEA and other civil rights legislation.

We urge the Transition Team to recommend the establishment of an Office for Gender Equity in the Biden-Harris Department of Education as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially,

Feminist Majority Foundation-Eleanor Smeal, President and  
Sue Klein, Ed.D, Education Equity Director.

**Organizations that signed as of 1-8-21: (117 organizations)**

1st Amendment-1st Vote, Inc.  
Activism Caucus of the Association for Women in Psychology  
Alcyone LLC  
Allies Reaching for Equity  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
Arkansas Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Equity Assistance Center  
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation  
Autistic Self Network  
BHS Stop Harassing  
BRAV Consultations  
California National Organization for Women  
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@Network for Healthy Families and Communities  
Catholics for Choice  
Center for Advancement of Public Policy

Center for Partnership Studies  
Central New York NOW Chapter  
Champion Women  
Charlottesville National Organization for Women  
Claremont Graduate University-Applied Gender Studies  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issue  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Collin College  
Committee for Equity in Women's Surfing  
Democratic Womens Club of The Villages, FL  
Disability Rights New York  
Displaced Homemakers Network of New Jersey, Inc.  
Durham NOW, Pauli Murray Chapter  
East Valley Indivisibles  
Education Law Center-PA  
Equal Means Equal  
End Rape on Campus  
ERA Coalition  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Florida NOW  
Florida NOW Education Fund  
Gender & Sexuality Studies Program at The University of Miami  
Girls Inc.  
Girls on the Run International  
Guam Department of Education  
Healthy Teen Network  
High School Title IX Consulting Services, LLC  
Hollywood Chapter, National Organization for Women  
Illinois Accountability Initiative  
Indiana NOW  
Institute for Women's Policy Research  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Jewish Women International  
Justice for Migrant Women  
Langelan & Associates  
Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Liberal Ladies Who Lunch of SE Kansas  
Loudoun County NOW  
MANA, A National Latina Organization  
Maryland Commission for Women  
Maryland National Organization for Women  
Maryland Women's Heritage Center  
Michigan NOW Fund's Heritage Center  
Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH)  
Monmouth County Democratic Women's Caucus  
Monroe County NOW

Montgomery County MD Chapter, National Organization for Women  
Ms. Magazine  
Multicultural Dimensions  
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Congress of Black Women, Inc  
National Council of Negro Women, Inc.  
National Equal Rights Amendment Alliance, Inc  
National Organization for Women  
National Organization for Women, Alaska  
National Organization for Women, Baltimore City/County  
National Organization for Women, Columbia (MO) Area  
National Organization for Women, Seattle Chapter  
National Organization for Women, Texas  
National Partnership for Women and Families  
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence  
National Women's Law Center  
National Women's Political Caucus  
New Moon Girls  
Ni-Ta-Nee NOW (Centre County PA National Organization for Women)  
North Jersey Sierra Group  
Northern New Jersey NOW  
Ohio National Organization for Women  
Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition  
Picture Social Justice, Inc.  
Pinellas County National Organization for Women  
Racial Unity Team (RUT)  
Renew California  
Reproaction  
Saving Democracy Team of the Villages, FL  
Shift Cultures: One Student  
Shrewsbury, New Jersey, Democratic Club  
Sociologists for Women in Society  
South Jersey NOW-Alice Paul chapter  
Southwest PA National Organization for Women  
Sport Equity  
Stop Sexual Assault in Schools  
Tacoma NOW  
The Hub Project  
The Global Community of Women in High School Sports  
The Goddess Temple of Palm Springs  
The Unity Council  
US National Committee for UN Women  
University of Hawaii at Manoa, Dept. of Women's Studies and Dept. of English  
Urban Learning Teaching and Research: American Ed Research Assoc: SIG ULTR  
Virginia NOW, Inc.

VoteERA.org  
Washington State National Organization for Women  
Westchester NY National Organization for Women  
Wild West Women, Inc.  
Women Enabled International  
Women Leading in Education Across Continents  
Women's Equal Justice Project  
Women's Media Center's  
Women's Sports Foundation  
Women's Studies Department, Old Dominion University  
YWCA USA

**Additional Well Known Individuals who signed:**

Lawrence Bloom, former Chicago City Council Member  
Letty Cottin Pogrebin, co-founder of Ms. Magazine, writer and activist