When women had the opportunity to prove themselves, they made themselves shine...

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Out of the Comfort Zone

Title IX, of the Education Amendments of 1972, states, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Before this law was passed over forty years ago, females could not participate in many of the sports activities provided for males. Males were given all the opportunities and all the funds. Many people do not realize that, through Title IX, many doors opened for women and gave them the chance to succeed and achieve better lives. Women have taken advantage of this opportunity and even surpassed expectations by becoming gold medalists at the Olympics, experiencing a decrease in health problems, and even becoming medical doctors. Although this is very beneficial for women, men see it as a disadvantage because they now have to share fifty-percent of the federal funds with female athletes, as well as share the facilities, equipment, coaching, and scholarships. Many people argue that Title IX’s time has passed and should be abolished, but I believe that Title IX has placed males and females on the same level and given women the same opportunities to compete, live healthy lifestyles, and have successful careers.

When the modern Olympics started in 1896, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of these Olympics, forbade women from competing because he thought it would be “impractical, industrial, unaesthetic, and incorrect” (qtd. in Brennan). As the years passed, women athletes were given the opportunity to compete but were entitled to participate in less than half of the events that males competed in. When they were given more opportunities, they took that fighting chance to show that they too could win medals in as many events as males. In the 2012 Olympics, for the first time, women exceeded men. The U.S.A. sent 268 women but only 261 men. When they returned, the women brought back not only the most medals but also the most gold medals in several different events. When women had the occasion to prove themselves, they made themselves shine and even set new world records.
Before women could go to the Olympics, they had to start somewhere. That’s why Title IX is still so important in high schools and colleges. It teaches girls and young women that they too can excel in life. Some girls first realize this in high school and make themselves distinguishable from the crowd. Joe Drape, from the *New York Times*, states that previously, “1 in 27 girls played a sport in high school.” By the year 2000, “1 in 3 girls played a sport in high school” (Drape). According to Peg Pennepacker of the National Federation of State High School Associations, being part of a sport provides females with the “benefits of physical fitness and overall health.” Title IX is much more than just a sports law. It has encouraged females to have better lifestyles, keep fit, boost their immune systems, and feel energetic and vibrant. This also helps reduce the chances of women suffering illnesses like diabetes, hepatic steatosis, or some heart diseases (“Effects”). Exercising decreases the chance of cancer, heart attack, stroke, or blood clots because it lowers blood pressure. Also, it decreases the chance of having a bone breakage or other injury. Many people who don’t exercise or strive to have healthy lifestyles suffer from depression because they don’t like how they look in front of others (“Effects”). Pennepacker also states that numerous studies have shown that participation in sports leads to a decrease in obesity, which leads to higher self-esteem.

Title IX has also aided women in their careers. Researchers show that women who’ve participated in sports, “have a greater chance of employment later in life and receive salaries 14–19% high than those who did not participate in sports” (Pennepacker). Before Title IX, “Women earned less than ten percent of law and medical degrees and just thirteen percent of doctoral degrees. Today, women nearly earn half of all law and medical degrees and more than fifty percent of all doctoral degrees” (Pennepacker). Susan Morse writes, “When you remove sports from the training of women, you make them less competitive in other activities including the work world.” This makes sense, because the skills you develop while you’re involved in sport can help you to attain qualities such as leadership, teamwork, cooperation, discipline, communication, commitment, friendship, compassion toward others, and determination. These are usually the type of qualities bosses look for in their employees. People with these attributes not only present themselves as good workers but also as good role models for others. On the other hand, since more females now participate in sports, this means that fewer men have the opportunity to participate. That leads to the cutting of some men’s sports teams. Joe Drape argues that although Title IX was a good law at first, it is now time to abolish it because it’s not fair to the men. Drape states that “more than 170 wrestling programs, 80 men’s tennis teams, 70 men’s gymnastics teams, and 45 men’s track teams have been eliminated, according to the General Accounting Office.”
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However, some men don’t realize how beneficial Title IX has been for women. The law has helped girls and women in school step out of their comfort zones and experience something that will make a difference to their future. Without this law, I would not have been able to participate in volleyball, track and field, or cross country. I’ve learned so much through sports and I’m continuing to develop this learning in college. Right now, I am studying to get my degree in kinesiology. Title IX is one of the best laws ever passed and I hope it stays that way for the rest of the women to come.

Works Cited