

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 21, 2014

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write today to urge you to request appropriate funding in your Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) Budget for enforcement of the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (the Clery Act) and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), with an emphasis on combatting sexual assault of college campuses.

As your Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault has noted, campus sexual assault is a troubling and pervasive problem on our college campuses. A report from the National Institute of Justice revealed that one in five women experiences rape during college and college women are at a higher risk for sexual assault than their non-college-bound peers. Campus sexual violence is a crime that threatens students' physical and emotional health and undermines students' right to a safe educational environment. Title IX requires schools to take steps to eliminate sexual harassment, including sexual assault, prevent its recurrence and address its effects. The Clery Act requires colleges and universities to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses, including sex offenses, and establish and disseminate campus safety and security policies.

Investigation and enforcement for violations of Title IX is handled by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Education. OCR receives over 10,000 complaints each year regarding the broad range of Federal civil rights laws that OCR enforces, including Title IX complaints regarding campus sexual violence. Due to budget constraints, OCR is currently operating with less than half the staff the office had in 1980, when OCR received a third as many complaints. In addition, not one of OCR's staff is dedicated exclusively to handling Title IX sexual violence complaints. As of October 2014, there were 85 institutions of higher education under investigation by OCR for violations of Title IX related to sexual violence. Violations under the Clery Act are investigated by a team within the Office of Federal Student Aid Compliance Division. This group has roughly a dozen staff members who are responsible for enforcement of the Clery Act at over 6,000 colleges and universities across the United States.

Given the extent of the problem of sexual assault on college campuses, as well as the growing number of universities and colleges under investigation by the Department of Education for violations of Title IX related to campus sexual violence, there is a clear need for additional trained staff to enforce the laws currently on the books. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education recently published final regulations regarding the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 amendments to the Clery Act. These regulations expand the scope of requirements under the Clery Act for universities and colleges to more effectively address and reduce campus sexual violence. Proper enforcement of these new regulations and the existing provisions of the Clery Act and Title IX requires adequate funding.

Therefore, we respectfully urge you to request \$2 million in your FY16 Budget for the purpose of employing thirteen additional staff in the Clery Compliance Division specifically trained and focused on investigating complaints regarding campus sexual assault. This funding request should be an addition to your overall budget request for the Office of Federal Student Aid Compliance Division of the U.S. Department of Education. Furthermore, we urge you to request at least \$102 million for the Office for Civil Rights, the amount you requested in your FY15 Budget, plus \$5.046 million for OCR to hire and train additional staff to focus on the investigation and enforcement of Title IX provisions regarding sexual violence.

The White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault has brought much-needed attention to the topic of campus sexual violence. We are hoping we can continue to work with your administration to ensure federal resources are applied to ensure compliance with existing federal laws. Therefore, we respectfully request that your Fiscal Year 2016 Budget include suitable funding for these efforts.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill  
United States Senator



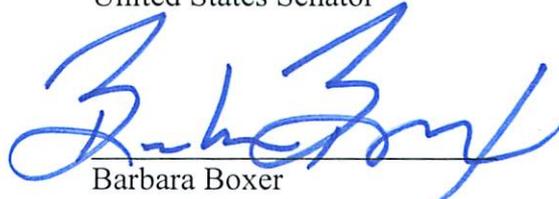
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Mark Warner  
United States Senator