

**RCW 49.60.500 Community athletics programs—Sex discrimination prohibited—Definitions.** (1) No city, town, county, or district may discriminate against any person on the basis of sex in the operation, conduct, or administration of community athletics programs for youth or adults. A third party receiving a lease or permit from a city, town, county, district, or a school district, for a community athletics program also may not discriminate against any person on the basis of sex in the operation, conduct, or administration of community athletics programs for youth or adults.

(2) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section.

(a) "Community athletics program" means any athletic program that is organized for the purposes of training for and engaging in athletic activity and competition and that is in any way operated, conducted, administered, or supported by a city, town, county, district, or school district other than those offered by the school and created solely for the students by the school.

(b) "District" means any metropolitan park district, park and recreation service area, or park and recreation district. [2009 c 467 § 2.]

**Findings—Declarations—2009 c 467:** "The legislature finds and declares:

On June 23, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed into law Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This landmark legislation provides that: "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...." Title IX has expanded opportunities for males as well as females in educational programs and activities, including ensuring access to athletic opportunities for girls and women in educational institutions and to male and female staff to coaching and athletics administrative positions in educational institutions. The dramatic increases in participation rates at both the high school and college levels since Title IX was passed show that when doors are opened to women and girls, they will participate.

Further, ensuring equality in the state of Washington, the legislature passed an amendment to the state Constitution, ratified by the voters in November 1972, providing "Equality of rights and responsibilities under the law shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex." In 1975, Washington continued to be at the forefront of this issue by adopting legislation that established our own statutory version of the federal Title IX law that prohibited "inequality in the educational opportunities afforded women and girls at all levels of the public schools in Washington state."

Athletic opportunities provide innumerable benefits to participants, including greater academic success, better physical and psychological health, responsible social behaviors, and enhanced interpersonal skills. Athletic scholarships make it possible for some young people to attend college. The Washington state legislature, recognizing the importance of full participation in athletics, has passed numerous bills directed at achieving equity and eliminating discrimination in intercollegiate athletics in the state's institutions of higher education.

Despite advances in educational settings and efforts by some local agencies to expand opportunities in community athletics programs, discrimination still exists that limits these opportunities. It is the intent of the legislature to expand and support equal participation in athletics programs, and provide all sports programs equal access to facilities administered by cities, towns, counties, metropolitan park districts, park and recreation service areas, or park and recreation districts.

Nothing in this act is intended to affect the holding in the Washington state supreme court's ruling in *Darrin v. Gould*, 85 Wn.2d 859, 540 P.2d 882 (1975) and its progeny that held it is not acceptable to discriminate in contact sports on the basis of sex." [2009 c 467 § 1.]