



National Alliance to
End Sexual Violence

Setbacks for Sexual Assault Survivors at the Department of Education

July 14, 2017

This past week there have been several instances causing great concern about the direction being taken by Department of Education and their work regarding Title IX enforcement. We were shocked and saddened to hear the recent statements by Candice Jackson, Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, attempting to invalidate victims and their reports of rape on college campuses. We felt the same about Secretary DeVos's decision to meet with, among other groups, the National Coalition for Men, [who have openly blamed victims of violence for their abuse](#). Though the Secretary attended one 90-minute meeting this week with survivors of campus sexual assault, she has provided multiple points of access to the Department for those who blame victims for their own abuse and seek to scale back Title IX enforcement efforts. These actions by the Department responsible for enforcing Title IX in our schools leaves us with grave concerns about their commitment to doing so.

Affirming victim blaming beliefs, and providing a platform for other groups who espouse those beliefs, will only lead to a lack of accountability for those who perpetrate violence. These behaviors have perpetuated a culture that condones sexual violence and undermines the work to end it. Support and resources for victims of sexual violence and the promotion of effective policies is necessary to ending sexual violence in our schools.

Regardless of intent, recent actions and communications by the Department indicate a softening of enforcement of Title IX and a lack of support for the 2011 Dear Colleague Letter. We adamantly oppose any attempts to strip the protections of Title IX or to avoid the explanative 2011 Dear Colleague Letter. We have requested to meet with the Department to discuss these matters but have received no reply. We remain, however, more than willing to work with them to right these missteps and re-instill confidence in the Department's commitment to addressing sexual violence in schools.

For additional questions, please contact Ebony Tucker at ebony@endsexualviolence.org or by phone at 202-464-4813.