

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Female Athletes Win Title IX Class Action Discrimination Lawsuit Against Sweetwater Union High School District

Additional claims will be set for trial in San Diego Federal Court

(San Diego, Calif.) – A group of current and future female athletes at Castle Park High School won a claim that their high school discriminated against girls by offering them significantly fewer opportunities to participate in athletics than boys.

On March 30, 2009, the Court issued an order granting plaintiffs' motion for partial summary judgment. The Court found that that "defendants are not in compliance with Title IX based on unequal participation opportunities in athletic program[s]." Importantly, this is the first case in which a class of high school female athletes has won a summary judgment motion on the issue of failure to provide equal participation opportunities to girls under Title IX.

In effect, the Court ruled that Castle Park High School did not allow girls the same access to athletics as it did boys. "I am so proud of our clients," said Elizabeth Kristen, Director of the Title IX K-12 Equality Project at the Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center in San Francisco. "These courageous young women came forward to fight against unfair treatment at their school and this Order vindicates them."

"Title IX is more than 35 years old, yet gender discrimination in high school sports continues to be rampant," said Vicky Barker, Legal Director of the California Women's Law Center. "I hope this Order serves as a wake-up call to other high schools that they must bring their athletic programs into compliance."

The students have three additional claims against the school and these will be set for trial in San Diego District Court. In April 2007, the class sued for injunctive relief under Title IX of the 1972 Education amendments, which bars sex discrimination in education, including athletic programs. The court certified the case as a class action in August 2008. The female athletes are represented by the Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center, the California Women's Law Center and the law firm of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP.

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The Legal Aid Society-Employment Law Center, founded in 1916, protects the rights and economic self-sufficiency of low-income and disadvantaged workers and their families throughout the Bay Area, California, and nationwide. The LAS-ELC provides a continuum of direct services, educational materials, and technical assistance to other groups, and legal representation. Its services include free advice and referral on employment issues and specialized programs addressing racial equality; gender equity; issues particularly affecting immigrant workers, including national origin and language-based discrimination; disability rights; and issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender/LGBT workers.

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