

Thursday, July 17, 2008

Re: "A New Frontier for Title IX: Science" by John Tierney

To the Editor:

To remain competitive in an increasingly technological world, our workforce must have the best minds in science and engineering, including the diversity that women and minorities provide. John Tierney's column "A New Frontier for Title IX: Science," failed to recognize this.

For 36 years, Title IX legislation has prohibited sex discrimination in education programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Just as other equal opportunity mandates enabled transformative change in fields such as fire fighters, police officers, and military personnel by opening them to women, so can Title IX change scientific careers from "male-typical pursuits" into careers where ALL members of society can participate. The best way to ensure this is for federal funding agencies to carry out their statutory obligations by conducting reviews at academic institutions. There is a big difference between Mr. Tierney's fantasy of quotas, and encouraging universities to take a good look at potentially discriminatory behavior.

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