

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

Letters to the Editor – April 8, 2024

## Fight for Equity

**Pat Ford-Roegner MSW, RN, FAAN**

At Philly Catholic schools in the '60s, we had little opportunity to play women's sports. My bike and the Jerry Blavat dances were my exercise. Many young women didn't play sports for cultural reasons, lack of encouragement, or fear of menstrual issues. But in 1996, the U.S. women's national soccer team took Olympic gold; Michelle Akers and Briana Scurry were my "sheroes." Last week, LSU's Angel Reese and Iowa's Caitlin Clark renewed their head-to-head matchup. My daughter became a high school cross-country and track star.

The difference over the intervening years? The 1972 enactment of Title IX (ensuring equal treatment of male and female students in educational settings, including sports), the 1976 founding of the National Women's Health Network (creating the women's health movement, which, among other things, helped us gain insurance coverage for family planning), and the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 (assuring that women could make their own health decisions). The backlash against women's control of their own health and women's progress in sports, the military, politics, and life in general is very disheartening — a reminder that the fight for fairness and equity is far from over.

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