

# PUBLIC JUSTICE E-LERT

AMERICA'S PUBLIC INTEREST LAW FIRM

October 11, 2011

As tennis legend [Billie Jean King](#) remarked a few years ago, Title IX litigation is essential to achieve gender equality in high-school and intercollegiate sports. We were honored and humbled that, at the time, King called Public Justice "[a champion](#)" in the battle for gender equity.

Title IX, of course, is a federal statute that prohibits sex discrimination in federally-funded education programs, and [our most recent Title IX case settled last Friday](#), averting a retaliation lawsuit on behalf of Michele Ruth, head coach of the girls' lacrosse team at Jensen Beach High School in Stuart, Fla. We were on the brink of filing a federal lawsuit against the Martin County School Board on Ruth's behalf when the settlement agreement was struck.



Coach Ruth has now returned to her team. "I am happy and relieved to be back in the job and with the team I care so much about," she said. "My players and I are looking forward to building on the successes we've achieved in only two seasons."

Ruth was fired in June by [Jensen Beach's](#) Athletic Director, who made no secret of his displeasure over Ruth's questions about Title IX compliance at the school, particularly the treatment of the girls' varsity lacrosse team, which was the school's only varsity team that was not allowed to play home games in the school stadium, the top athletic facility on campus. Instead, the girls were relegated to a blighted and dangerous field used for practice by some of the school's other teams.

After an outpouring of support for Ruth from parents and lacrosse players, and a demand letter from Public Justice to the School Board's Superintendent, the School Board agreed to reinstate Ruth as

head coach and allow the girls' lacrosse team to host its home games in Jensen Beach's stadium.

All too often, girls' coaches are fired in retaliation for raising valid Title IX concerns and schools don't take corrective action until a court orders it. We are pleased that the Martin County School Board took Michele Ruth's Title IX concerns seriously and reinstated her without the necessity of a lawsuit.

Thanks and congratulations to [Adele Kimmel](#), Public Justice's Managing Attorney, and [Linda M. Correia](#), of Webster, Fredrickson, Correia & Puth in Washington, D.C., who were both co-counsel for Ruth.

Thanks and congratulations to you, too. If it weren't for your support, we would not be able to challenge Title IX violations, Coach Ruth would still be out of her job, and the girls' lacrosse team would still be playing its home games on a blighted field.

Arthur Bryant

Executive Director

Public Justice and the  
Public Justice Foundation