

**For Immediate Release**

December 23, 2020

**Contact:** Lucy Sears,  
Public Justice,

[lsears@publicjustice.net](mailto:lsears@publicjustice.net)

## **Civil Rights Groups Seek Information on Impact of Dept. of Ed. Regulations on Title IX Complaints**

*Documents requested through the Freedom of Information Act will show impact of rule changes on key avenue for students to assert their civil rights*

Public Justice and the National Youth Law Center late yesterday [filed a Freedom of Information Act request](#) that will reveal to the public the impact of the Department of Education's August 2020 Title IX regulations on sexual harassment. The records these advocacy groups seek will demonstrate what complaints alleging Title IX violations Sec. DeVos's Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights dismissed under its new rules.

The August 2020 regulations, finalized after a truncated notice and comment process, have limited student survivors' civil rights, and made it harder for them to seek government enforcement of Title IX when they are mistreated by their schools. In [today's request](#), Public Justice and the National Youth Law Center write:

*These regulations purport to constrict the obligations schools have to respond to sexual harassment by, among other things, adopting an overly stringent definition of sexual harassment, limiting the geographical scope of a school's responsibility, and protecting schools from any consequences so long as they did not have actual knowledge of the harassment and respond in a deliberately indifferent manner.*

They continue:

*We request copies of all OCR letters to complainants or recipients that relied on any of the provisions of the new Title IX sexual harassment regulations to: (1) dismiss a complaint or any allegations of a complaint; (2) decline to open any allegations of a complaint for investigation; or (3) find insufficient evidence of a violation for one or more allegations of a complaint or compliance review (including a draft mixed determination letter shared with a recipient).*

The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights has 20 business days to produce the records the groups requested yesterday under the law.

"This Administration designed these regulations to seriously limit student victims' ability to secure the equal educational opportunities they're entitled to by law," said Alexandra Brodsky, Kazan Budd Staff Attorney with Public Justice's Students' Civil Rights Project.

“The public has a right to the details of the toll their government’s action has taken on survivors.”

The filed FOIA request is available [here](#).