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White House Releases Updated Title IX Guidance on Campus Sexual Assault

As part of the "It's On Us" campaign to end campus sexual assault by changing campus culture, the White House has released guidance to assist with enforcement of institutional Title IX policies.

The documents released include a "[Guide to Drafting a Sexual Assault Policy](#)," "[Definitions of Key Terms in Sexual Misconduct Policies](#)," the "[Role of Title IX Coordinator](#)," and how to include "[Interim and Supportive Measures for Victims](#)."

All education institutions in the United States that receive federal funding must [adhere to Title IX policies](#). One of these policies includes having at least one employee in charge of coordinating efforts to comply with Title IX, the federal law prohibiting sex discrimination in school programs or activities. The Title IX coordinator can also be the person who implements the school's sexual misconduct policy and responds to misconduct allegations.

The White House guidance also includes a definition of consent as something that is "informed, voluntary, and mutual, and can be withdrawn at any time." The definition explains, "There is no consent when there is force, expressed or implied, or when coercion, intimidation, threats, or duress is used. Whether a person has taken advantage of a position of influence over another person may be a factor in determining consent. Silence or absence of resistance does not imply consent. Past consent to sexual activity with another person does not imply ongoing future consent with that person or consent to that same sexual activity with another person."

The guidelines also include a checklist for how to properly develop a sexual misconduct policy, information for reporting sexual misconduct, how to support a survivor of sexual assault, and specific definitions that go along with these policies.

"Our society still does not sufficiently value women," [President Barack Obama said during the unveiling of the campaign](#). "Unless women are allowed to fulfill their full potential, America will not fulfill its full potential [Laws] won't be enough unless we change the culture that allows assault to happen in the first place."

Vice President Joe Biden has emphasized that men must be involved. "Violence against women is not a women's issue alone, it's a men's issue," said Vice President Joe Biden said. "To all the guys out there: Step up. Be responsible. Intervene."

According to a [White House report](#) released early this year, 1 in 5 women are sexually assaulted during their time in college and only 12 percent report the crime. Currently [over 70 colleges and universities are under investigation for mishandling sexual assault cases](#).

[It's On Us](#) is an ongoing part of the "[Not Alone](#)" campaign and pushes for students to recognize

sexual assault for what it is, identify warning signs, intervene when it seems consent cannot or has not been given, and change their campus cultures so that survivors are supported and sexual assault is seen as unacceptable. Individuals can participate in It's On Us by going to ItsOnUs.org and taking the pledge, or by going a step further and [downloading the free toolkit](#) to help implement the campaign in their school or community.

Media Resources: NotAlone.gov; ItsOnUs.org; Feminist Newswire 9/19/2014, 5/16/2014; Washington Post 9/14/14; The White House Council on Women and Girls 1/2014

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