

THE ACLU OF RHODE ISLAND AND FREEDOM FROM SEX DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination on the basis of gender has been all-too-common in Rhode Island in a variety of settings – in school, on the baseball field, and even in the courthouse. The R.I. ACLU has played an important role in eliminating many vestiges of sex discrimination, as the sample cases below demonstrate:

1975: *Fortin v. Darlington Little League*. Favorable appeals court decision finding unconstitutional a Little League rule which barred girls from playing in the League.

1977: *In re: Johnston School Athletic Program*. Favorably-settled Title IX complaint alleging that the school provided unequal athletic opportunity and facilities for girls.

1979: *Traugott v. Petit*. Favorable state Supreme Court decision holding that women have a right to use the name of their choice on their driver's license and registration.

1984: *Planned Parenthood v. Board of Medical Review*. Successful challenge to state law requiring husbands to be notified before a woman could have an abortion.

1989: *Virella v. Scott*. Favorably settled federal lawsuit challenging a Health Department policy denying separated married women the right to give their children the surname of their choice.

1990: *In re: Lucille Riccitelli*. Successful suit filed after a judge denied a woman the right to change her name back to her birth-name without her husband's consent.

1992: *Sammataro v. Sammataro*. Successful appeal on behalf of a mother who lost custody of her daughter solely for receiving welfare assistance.

1996: *Cohen v. Brown University*. "Friend of the court" brief filed in support of a successful challenge to Brown University's athletic program as sex-discriminatory in violation of Title IX.

2000: *Perry v. East Providence School Committee*. Successfully settled sex discrimination complaint challenging the school district's advertisement of a vacancy for a special education aide position for men only.

2003: *Rathbun v. Autozone*. In this appeal of a federal sex discrimination lawsuit, the ACLU successfully intervened to address the appropriate statute of limitations for filing suit under the R.I. Civil Rights Act.

2003: *Melendez v. Town of North Smithfield*. Federal lawsuit, on behalf of a female Hispanic firefighter applicant, challenging a state law giving a town a one-time exemption from the Fair Employment Practices Act in order to allow its acquisition of an all white, all male private fire and rescue service.

2007: *Horn v. Southern Union Company*. Representation of a plaintiff in a suit raising important issues about the appropriate statute of limitations for being able to sue for claims of sex discrimination in employment.

2008: *Women's Studies Organization of Rhode Island College v. Rhode Island College*. Successful lawsuit challenging the college's censorship of a campus sign display sponsored by a student women's rights group.

