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Delegation for the Improvement of a School Field

Hi, my name is Ella Kennedy and I'm the President of the Student Council at Loretto Abbey. I speak here today on behalf of my own experience, and my understanding of the experiences of students within my school population.

At Loretto, the quality of our field has always been subpar and lackluster at best. This is something that as a senior student I have always known, and have been socialized into normalizing for the past four years.

We have a mediocre field: it's unlevel, smaller than standard, has holes, runs muddy, and inhabits narrowly functioning goal posts. But I have always figured "it just is what it is."

There are worse fields, surely. There are better ones, definitely. And there are schools with access to none.

The issue is that this access seems to be unequal. It's about time girls schools stop accepting poor athletic facilities as normalcy when this disparity is not shared among our brothers' schools or our fathers' old schools.

I grew up with a very athletically inclined older brother, Liam. He played just about every sport under the sun. I grew up knowing that my brother's athletic advancements were highly competitive and prioritized, because he had the opportunity to turn this skill into a profession and be highly regarded as an athlete.

I grew up a very athletically inclined child too. I played just about every sport under the sun. Never as well as Liam, and never competitively. My parents would often miss my practices to see his games. I never cared because I knew the advancement of my abilities would never lead me into a professional career, where athletics could stand alone as a woman. I would have to pursue a "real and supportive" career to coincide.

The problem is that once again I started accepting this disparity as normalcy.

When Liam entered highschool, not much changed. He attended Chaminade, an all boys school. The athletics were highly perceived. Their football team hosted regular tournaments and won champion titles.

My school doesn't even have a football team.

They have bleachers and a regulation field and benches and equipment.

We roll our ankles on the field playing elephant ball in gym class.

They have athletic support.

We start to understand that the unsurprising disparities between the board's provision to quality, accessible athletic facilities cannot be coincidental. Not when it affects every all girls school that I have ever attended, or any of my female friends have studied at.

As female students, we start to wonder why it has taken so long for the playing ground to be leveled- quite literally.

I start to wonder why it has been normalized that our sports are constantly under-prioritized. That maybe we don't deserve this access?

When you think of Loretto Abbey, why do you think of its gorgeous historical site and largely academic student body. And not our basketball players, or soccer finalists, or cross country stars. And when you think of Chaminade you applaud their brotherhood and champion football team.

It's about time we start breaking these biases and supplying all girls schools with the athletic facilities they deserve to foster their potential and learning.

This starts as simple as obtaining a usable field.

Loretto Abbey has a widely diverse group of talented, gifted and athletic students who are being deprived of the opportunity to prosper athletically, and feel as if they don't deserve to.

Upgrading our school field serves purpose in improving our physical education programs, our mental health, our safety, overall betterment of our school morale and thus, our students education as a whole.

It's about time our teams have acclaim and can host tournaments, not travel 40 minutes by bus to practice. Time that our teams have fans and are cheered for the way we all have been cheering for mens sports for decades.

Time for some change, even if it comes in the form of giving one all girls school a usable field.
Thank you.