

The Irresponsible Sex Education Bill SB 286

SB 286, sponsored by Senator Mary Lazich, requires that abstinence be the primary focus for human growth and development programs.

- SB 286 amends current law, which allows human sexuality education to include abstinence and contraception, to require that schools who teach human growth and development focus on abstinence-only messages.
- Sexually transmitted infection information is not currently included in human growth and development curricula.
- Abstinence-only messages do not teach our teens to make safe, responsible decisions now and leave them to flounder and make risky decisions later as adults.

Elevating abstinence-only education above comprehensive sexuality education that focuses on abstinence and contraception endangers teens.

- Research shows that by age 18, over 70% of boys and 60% of girls have engaged in sexual activity.
- Abstinence is an important focus for sex ed curriculum; however, downplaying important contraception education is deeply irresponsible and dangerous. Teens deserve the truth about prevention.
- Even with the best intentions, abstinence is only effective if it is practiced 100% of the time. It is irresponsible to leave teens, and later adults, unable to protect themselves from unintended pregnancies and STIs.
 - Over 12,000 teens in Wisconsin will become pregnant this year, 80% are unintended pregnancies.
 - Milwaukee has the second highest teen birth rate in the country.
 - Wisconsin has the second highest Chlamydia rate in the country.
 - Adolescents are biologically more susceptible to Chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV.

Studies and practice show that abstinence-plus sexuality education that contains a clear prevention message is responsible and effective.

- Research showing that teens who receive sexuality education that includes contraception information are more likely than those who receive abstinence-only to delay sexual activity and to use contraceptives when they do become sexually active. (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2001.)
- Research demonstrating that the current drop in teen pregnancy is attributed 75% to more effective contraceptive usage and 25% to increased abstinence. (AGI, 2004.)

This information was share with you by the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health.

*For more information about legislation related to reproductive health or to support women's health contact WAWH at
PO Box 1726 • Madison, WI 53701 • (608) 251-0139 or toll-free (800) 300-WAWH • info@wiawh.org •
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Fact Sheet

- A report by then- Surgeon General David Satcher demonstrating that sex education programs that focus equally on abstinence and contraceptive use can help delay the onset of teen sexual activity, reduce their number of partners and increase contraceptive use when they do become sexually active. (*Call to Action to Promote Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior*, 2001).
- A 2003 report evaluated the effectiveness of 16 abstinence plus contraception programs. (Advocates for Youth, May 2003.) The results indicated that:
 - a. 12 programs showed a statistically significant delay in the timing of first sex for adolescents, relative to control youth;
 - b. 16 of the programs demonstrated reductions in other sexual risk-taking behaviors;
 - c. 8 programs showed significant declines in teen pregnancy, birth and STI rates, relative to control youth.

Parents, the public and medical organizations overwhelmingly support medically accurate, comprehensive sexuality education that focuses on both abstinence and contraception instruction.

- According to a 2004 survey by NPR, Harvard University and the Kaiser Health Foundation, more than 8 out of 10 Americans believe that young people should have access to information about protecting themselves from unplanned pregnancies and STIs.
- Recent polling in Wisconsin shows that 77% of voters favor comprehensive sex education that includes abstinence plus contraception information.
- The American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Public Health Association, and the Society of Adolescent Medicine all support responsible sex education that includes abstinence plus contraception instruction.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recently concluded that only sexuality education programs including both abstinence and prevention components reduce teen pregnancy rates. In addition, the report recommends that all pediatricians help ensure that adolescents have knowledge of and access to contraception. (Pediatrics, July 2005.)