

## 2009 Wisconsin Act 134 “Healthy Youth Act” Talking Points

[Assembly Bill 458](#), now [2009 Wisconsin Act 134](#), grossly misnamed the "Healthy Youth Act," is dangerous for our children. Senator Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) and Representative Tamara Grigsby's (D-Milwaukee) “Healthy Youth Act” will dramatically, and negatively, alter Wisconsin’s former Human Growth & Development (HG&D) or “sex ed” statutes. (The Senate companion was [SB 324](#).)

The bill passed in the state Assembly in late 2009. The State Senate passed AB 458, as amended in the Assembly and the Senate on January 28, 2010. On that same day, several hours after the Senate vote on AB 458, the Assembly took up the Senate’s amendment of the bill and concurred in it. Governor Doyle signed the “Healthy Youth Act” into law on February 24, 2010, as 2009 Wisconsin Act 134. As enacted, this law has many problems, but Wisconsin Family Action's (WFA) main concerns are:

- 1) **Assembly Bill 458/SB 324 remove the possibility that any school district in Wisconsin that chooses to have a Human Growth and Development program can elect to have one that is abstinence-centered.**

They condemn all school districts to the so-called “comprehensive sex education” approach that has been responsible for the crisis that we currently have in unprecedented rates of sexually transmitted diseases among our teens and increasing teen pregnancies.

- 2) **Assembly Bill 458/SB 324 remove the current requirement that marriage and parental responsibility must be taught in the same course and same year as particular HG&D subjects.**

This requirement links sexual behavior appropriately to marriage. If the sponsors of this measure are in earnest about reversing trends in youth regarding sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancies, then they will reinstate these requirements because linking sexual activity to marriage is one of the best ways to reduce unintended teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Senator Taylor's Substitute Amendment keeps the requirement that marriage and parental responsibility must be taught, but *removes* the requirement that they be taught in the same class and same year as the HG&D topics. This is a critical change.

- 3) **AB 458/SB 324 creates *de facto* a “comprehensive sex ed” program for any Wisconsin school district that decides to offer a HG&D program.**

For the purposes of sex ed, the bill mandates and defines “medically accurate information” in a way favorable to comprehensive sex education (CSE) by citing medical associations that support CSE. The bill includes in its mandated definition of “age appropriate” the statement “behavior typical for the age group”. If 8th graders are having sex and it is typical in a school, that is now an “age-appropriate” standard that justifies teaching the “proper use of barrier methods,” etc.

- 4) **Assembly Bill 458/SB 324 require that all instructional materials and methods must not "promote bias" against any pupil's sexual orientation or against sexually active pupils.**

This attempt to make "sex ed" value neutral means nothing can be taught or said that shows the unusually high risk involved in homosexual relationships and in unmarried sexual activity in general. This means that connecting sex with marriage or even love is considered discriminatory. It’s an entirely new level of value-free education. This promotes *unhealthy* youth, not healthy youth. This is why [Fair Wisconsin](#) is promoting the bill.

**5) AB 458/SB 324 opens the door for groups such as Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin or other so-called “family planning” groups to conduct the HG&D course in any given school district.**

The bill removes current restrictions prohibiting groups such as Planned Parenthood from providing instruction in “human sexuality, reproduction; family planning...including natural family planning, HIV and AIDS; prenatal development; childbirth; adoption; available prenatal and postnatal support; and male and female responsibility.” So-called family-planning organizations, such as Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, are being given free and open access to present basically whatever they want in our public school classrooms to captive audiences.

**6) AB 458/SB 324 diminishes local control regarding HG&D curriculum for students of all grade levels in public schools.**

- a. Under current law, school districts choosing to provide a HG&D curriculum are required to a) promote abstinence as the safest option and b) include marriage and parenting information. Although other sex-ed topics are offered, school boards are not required to provide them. Under AB 458/SB 324, school boards choosing to provide an HG&D program are required to teach state-mandated topics, including such things as “the proper use of contraceptives and barrier methods.”
- b. The Wisconsin Healthy Youth Alliance was involved in the drafting and promotion of this bill. The Alliance is composed of a number of organizations known for promoting promiscuity among youth, including the ACLU of Wisconsin, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood and Sex Out Loud.<sup>1</sup> These are not the organizations and individuals we want involved in directing the sex education of our schools and children.

***Myth***

Most kids are sexually active or are going to be sexually active while in school so we might as well teach them how to do it “safely.”

***Fact***

The only real “safe” sex is in marriage with a monogamous partner. Condoms and barrier methods are not 100% effective (or even close) on preventing pregnancy and STD’s, particularly among youth. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Center for Health Statistics and the Guttmacher Institute, 2/3 of high school students in the U.S. are not currently sexually active and 52% of students have never had sexual intercourse. While increasing slightly over the last two years (+3% in 2006 and +1% in 2007), the overall teen birth rate has decreased sharply (34%) since 1991.<sup>2</sup>

***Myth***

All the studies show that “comprehensive sex education” is the only effective way to prevent teen pregnancies and the spread of STD’s. Abstinence and “virginity pledges” don’t prevent teen sexual activity and actually contribute to the spread of STD’s and the prevalence of teen pregnancy.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ppawi.org/legislation/sexed\\_alliance.aspx](http://www.ppawi.org/legislation/sexed_alliance.aspx), accessed 10/05/2009.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.abstinenceworks.org/images/stories/pdfs/most\\_teens\\_abstinent.pdf](http://www.abstinenceworks.org/images/stories/pdfs/most_teens_abstinent.pdf), accessed 10/05/2009.

***Fact***

Abstinence-centered education does not promote “virginity pledges.” In fact, “purity balls,” “virginity pledges,” etc., constitute an entirely different approach to abstinence than abstinence-centered education.<sup>3</sup> Abstinence-centered education is a holistic approach that focuses on the real-life, psychological, physical, economical, social and emotional effects of teen sexuality while teaching students a life plan for success.<sup>4</sup>

Comprehensive studies of abstinence-centered education are limited but the results so far are positive. Twenty years of research of comprehensive sex education (CSE) indicates that school-based CSE programs show no evidence of effectiveness at decreasing teen pregnancy or STD’s, or increasing consistent condom use.<sup>5</sup>

***For More Information, visit the following sites:***

[Abstinence Works](#)

[Wisconsin Abstinence Coalition](#)

[Wisconsin “Healthy Youth Alliance”](#)

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<sup>3</sup> Studies validating the efficacy of abstinence-centered education:

[http://www.abstinenceworks.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=45](http://www.abstinenceworks.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid=45), accessed 10/05/2009.

<sup>4</sup> To find out more about abstinence-centered education, visit:

[http://www.abstinenceworks.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=36](http://www.abstinenceworks.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=36), accessed 10/05/2009.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.abstinenceworks.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=40](http://www.abstinenceworks.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=40), accessed 10/05/2009.