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“Strong Communities...Healthy Kids Act” Restores Choice to Communities and School Districts ***Bill repeals Madison’s one-size-fits-all approach to sex ed***

MADISON—“It’s time for the heavy boot of Madison and Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin to be removed from the necks of Wisconsin’s school districts when it comes to sex ed programs,” said Julaine Appling, president of Wisconsin Family Action. “And the Strong Communities...Healthy Kids Act” (Senate Bill 237) will do just that. This bill allows school districts, in cooperation with parents and other community members, to make choices that will enhance the optimal health and well-being of their students.”

The “Strong Communities...Healthy Kids Act” is about local control. It is a bill that removes the requirement that all school districts in Wisconsin that want to have a sex ed program must have one that is designed by Planned Parenthood and approved by Madison. “This is a bill predicated on the notion that parents, community members, and school district officials know better than Madison does about what is in the best interest of their students,” noted Appling.

Wisconsin Family Action worked to defeat the so-called “Healthy Youth Act” that was enacted last year because it took away local school districts’ ability to make important decisions regarding the sex ed curriculum, if a school district elected to have such a program. “If a school district believes that an abstinence-centered program is the best way to promote the optimal health and well-being of its students, then it should have the right to design and implement such a program. Current law prevents any school district from making this choice,” continued Appling.

Sen. Mary Lazich (R-New Berlin) and Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt (R-Fond du Lac) are the sponsors of the bill. Sen. Lazich has long been an advocate of school districts developing sex ed curricula that reflect the values of their communities, while also insisting that students be informed that abstinence from sexual activity until marriage is the preferred behavior for unmarried students and is the only 100% reliable way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. The “Strong Communities...Healthy Kids Act” accomplishes both of these.

Appling continued, “We are grateful for the leadership Sen. Lazich in particular has provided on this important bill. She is proposing a bill that is truly about allowing communities to exercise their strength and make the very best decisions regarding what their children will be taught in any sex ed program. No one cares more about their children being healthy than parents. Keeping sex ed choices close to home allows those who care the most to have the most direct input, rather than having Madison dictate a one-size-fits-all program.”

The “Strong Communities...Healthy Youth Act” (SB 237) is scheduled for a public hearing today in the Senate Education Committee, chaired by Sen. Luther Olsen (R-Ripon).