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State Assembly Short-Changes Wisconsin Students ***48 Representatives Pass “Unhealthy Youth Act”***

"Parents, beware. Planned Parenthood may be teaching a very unhealthy lesson to your children in your public school, if liberal state legislators have their way," said Julaine Appling, president of Wisconsin Family Action (WFA).

Late yesterday, on a 48-43 vote, the State Assembly passed a major revision to Wisconsin's Human Growth and Development (sex ed) law. All forty-two Republicans were joined by one Democrat, Rep. Bob Ziegelbauer (Manitowoc), in voting against the so-called "Healthy Youth Act." Rep. Annette Polly Williams (D-Milwaukee) was not present for the vote but her no-vote was paired with the yes-vote of another absent legislator.

"From the beginning, this bill has been heavily pushed by Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, NARAL Pro-Choice of Wisconsin, homosexual advocacy group Fair Wisconsin and other such groups that make money by promoting unhealthy lifestyles to our youth. This bill is a dream come true for them," commented Appling.

The bill would require all school districts in Wisconsin that elect to have a Human Growth and Development program, which is the vast majority, to teach the misnamed "comprehensive sex ed" approach, including the proper use of barrier methods of contraception. Among other significant changes, the bill does away with the current requirement that schools with Human Growth and Development programs must present abstinence until marriage as the preferred behavior choice for unmarried students and requires all instructional methods and materials to be free of "bias" as it relates to several categories including, sexual orientation and sexually active students. Rep. Joan Ballweg's (R-Markesan) amendment, which the Assembly adopted, added "religion" to that list.

Several legislators spoke up on the floor last night and Tuesday during initial debate, passionately denouncing the bill and promoting the importance of letting local school districts make the decision on the type of sex ed program they want. Rep. Ballweg was joined by representatives Joel Kleefish (R-Oconomowoc), Dan LeMahieu (R-Cascade), Steve Kestell (R-Elkhart Lake), Leah Vukmir (R-Wauwatosa), Pat Strachota (R-West Bend), Mark Gottlieb (R-Port Washington), Richard Spanbauer (R-Oshkosh) and Brett Davis (R-Oregon), in attempting to bring reason to the debate and promote a truly healthy alternative for Wisconsin youth--abstinence-centered programs that take a holistic approach to sex ed.

Such programs don't ignore the temptations or the risks, but provide youth with a reliable roadmap for truly healthy futures by fully equipping them to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and infections, as well as damaged emotions, by remaining abstinent until marriage. Yesterday, a CDC report was released indicating not only that ten different studies have shown that abstinence education produces a significant reduction in teen sexual activity, but that efforts were made to suppress that evidence.¹

¹ <http://www.lifenews.com/nat5625.html>

Appling noted, "This is a disastrous bill in so many ways. I am, however, very pleased and thankful that so many legislators saw the proposal for what it is--a roadmap for very unhealthy youth--and spoke up against it and did their best to present thoughtful and helpful amendments to try to mitigate the damage."

WFA has done extensive grassroots work on this bill, including media interviews, radio commentaries, thousands of phone calls to concerned citizens, and e-alerts.

"We are incredibly grateful to the thousands of Wisconsin citizens who took time to contact their legislators on this important bill. All elected officials need to be held accountable by those they represent. Our folks did a fantastic job of that on this leg of the legislative process. We know they'll do the same when the bill hits the Senate floor," said Appling.

The State Senate has held a public hearing on its version of the bill, clearing the way for that body to vote on the measure when it reconvenes in January.

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Wisconsin Family Action, the legislative action arm of Wisconsin Family Council (www.wifamilycouncil.org), actively strengthens and preserves marriage, family, life and liberty in Wisconsin.