



OPPOSE

The Healthy Teens Act

S-1342 Winner

This bill would provide grant money for sexual education programs. Contrary to its title, the bill would not lead to *healthy* teens, but only *hurt* teens. New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms (NYCF) recognizes that we live in a sex-saturated society, with many young people engaging in sexual activity. That is all the more the reason why it is in the best interest of the state, the family and the adolescent that higher ideals be promoted. NYCF is opposed to the bill for the following reasons.

- Physical well-being is not the only thing one should consider. Man is as much intellectual, emotional and spiritual as physical. Any sex education program that fails to acknowledge this reality fails New York State's young people.
- The enactment clause refers to the bill as the "Healthy Teens Act," however the specific language of the bill does not limit its scope to adolescents. The language changes the wording to "young people" and stresses implementing sexual education at an early age. This raises questions as to exactly what ages and grades would be instructed in this kind of material.
- The bill requires that no program "may include information or messages that contradict any of the components", including the development of a healthy attitude toward "sexual orientation". This language would eliminate proven successful, faith-based groups that may hold moral objections to certain sexual behaviors.
- There is an inconsistency with abstinence education not being a mandatory "component of instruction", despite the fact that the bill reads "such curriculum shall include, but not be limited to, a comprehensive block of instruction that stresses abstinence as the most effective and appropriate protection against HIV/AIDS and pregnancy..."

This could be resolved by mandating a component of instruction "C" (abstinence) as equal a mandate as components "A" (age-appropriate and medically accurate) and "B" (does not teach or promote religion, but may provide discussions relating to moral, ethical or religious views relating to sex and sexual relationships).

- It is unclear who will determine what is "age-appropriate" sexual education and what will be the factors used in that determination.