



AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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DEVON CHAFFEE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
Governor of New Hampshire
State House
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Governor Hassan:

The American Civil Liberties Union of New Hampshire respectfully urges you to veto House Bill 332. HB 332 would require all school districts to provide at least two weeks advance parental notification about “any course material used for instruction of human sexuality or human sexual education.”

Under current law (RSA 186:11,IX-c) New Hampshire school districts are already required to adopt a policy allowing parents or legal guardian to except students from course material they determine is objectionable. HB 332 singles out one type of subject matter for different treatment under our state law, creating additional obstacles for schools that want to offer sexual education curriculum.

Sexual education curricula gives students the tools they need to make healthy and responsible life decisions. Young people need accurate, complete information to help them prevent pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases, to develop healthy relationships, and to address dating violence and sexual assault. Schools are a critical environment for providing young people with the knowledge and skills they will need at whatever age they become sexually active.

In fact, a nationwide study of 15-19 year olds found that teens who participated in sexuality education programs that discuss the importance of delaying sex and provide information about contraceptive use were significantly less likely to report teen pregnancies than were those who received either no sex education or attended abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.^[1]

Moreover, singling out any particular type of education inevitably creates a biased perspective in the classroom. Requiring additional parental notification for certain materials casts a negative light on the subject despite its educational value. It also opens the door to the isolation of other types of educational material that could be subject to controversy.

New Hampshire should be focusing on educational value when addressing the selection of quality course materials, instead of creating barriers to schools delivering much needed information to their students. For these reasons, we ask you to veto HB 332.

Sincerely,

Devon Chaffee
Executive Director



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^[i] Pamela K. Kohler et al., *Abstinence-Only and Comprehensive Sex Education and the Initiation of Sexual Activity and Teen Pregnancy*, 42 J. ADOLESCENT HEALTH 324 (2008).