

The **Healthy Youth Act**, Wisconsin Statute Sec. 118.019 is smart public policy that sets a minimum standard for sex education in Wisconsin – requiring that sex education taught in Wisconsin public schools to be medically accurate, age-appropriate and comprehensive. The law is not a mandate and preserves the local control of parents, teachers and school administrators who have long made the human growth and development curriculum decisions in Wisconsin.

For the sake of Wisconsin's young people, the public health of our state and the health of our economy, VOTE NO TO SB 237!

SB 237 Undermines & Reduces Role of Teachers and Administrators in Curriculum Decisions

It places strict regulations on the advisory committee charged with making curriculum decisions by limiting the number of teachers and school board members who are allowed to participate and it puts limits on the number of parents, health care professionals and students who are allowed to be on the committee.

SB 237 Dismisses Medically Supported Research

It removes the requirement that curriculum be medically accurate. Current law goes to great length to ensure that students receive accurate and evidence based information that is recognized as such by experts in the field of medicine and public health. The bill removes requirements that the information be based on sound research methods and compromises current curriculum in the following ways:

- a) The repeal removes the importance of communicating with parents about sexual decision making and limits instruction to communicating with parents only, not other trusted adults.
- b) The repeal eliminates the meaning of medically accurate leaving the validity of “facts” up to chance and eliminates teaching medically accurate health information about puberty, pregnancy, parenting, body image and gender stereotypes.
- c) The repeal greatly waters down teaching teen skills to avoid dating violence by promoting self-esteem and positive interpersonal skills focusing on healthy relationships.
- d) The repeal removes the section which emphasizes teaching students the skills to recognize sexual and physical abuse and provide counseling, medical and legal resources for survivors of abuse.
- e) The repeal adds abstinence-only language to several sections of the statute and supports failed abstinence-only until marriage policies.

SB 237 Leaves Parents in the Dark

It removes parental notification from the statute which ensures that parents are aware of when sex education is NOT being taught in their student's class.

SB 237 Allows Discrimination

The repeal removes the non-discrimination clause in the current law that prohibits discrimination against students on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or sexual activity.

SB 237 Bans Doctors and Nurses for Teaching Health Classes

The repeal also bans health care providers like doctors and nurses from teaching health classes that include sex education.

SB 237 Forces Wisconsin to Apply for Ineffective Abstinence-Only Programs

The repeal forces the state to apply for abstinence-only until marriage funds and removes the authority to apply for comprehensive sex education programs. Due to the years of research documenting the failure of abstinence only programming and the incredible waste of federal dollars that were spend on such programming under Presidents Clinton and Bush, currently there are no federal funds available for abstinence-only until marriage sex education programs.

SB 237 Endorses Teen Pregnancy and Ignores Teen Pregnancy Prevention

The repeal also adds components that emphasize teaching students how to have a healthy pregnancy and what kinds of supports are available for teens who have babies instead of giving students the tools to avoid unintended pregnancies. It's It also includes components that link marriage and parenting as the only appropriate behavior. It adds language requiring the discussion of how marriage benefits society in such a religious tone.

The repeal removes any language about preventing teen pregnancy and STDs by contraceptives or barrier methods. It requires programs to rely on the message that abstinence is the only way. Over two decades of peer reviewed research have shown that abstinence-only until marriage sex education programs are incredibly ineffective in changing teen behavior. The weight of the research based evidence over the past two decades has clearly shown that sex education programs including an abstinence message coupled with fact based information about contraceptives and condoms are the most effective.

Background Information

- 45% of high schoolers self-report that they are currently sexually active. Yet only 61% of those teens used a condom during their last sexual counter.
- According to a 2008 study by the CDC, 1 in 4 young women has an STD.
- 20% of all new HIV infections in Wisconsin are among youth ages 15-24 years.
- Data shows that a many Wisconsin counties have teen birth rates higher than the Wisconsin and U.S. average: Menominee, Milwaukee, Sawyer, Adams, Racine, Rock, and Langlade. And the cities of Green Bay, Racine and Kenosha have teen birth rates almost double the national average.
- Children born to teen mothers are 9 times more likely to live in poverty. And only 40% of teen moms graduate from high school, compared to 75% of young women who post-pone childbearing to age 20-21. (Why it Matters: Teen Pregnancy and Education, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen & Unintended Pregnancy).