

Dear Congressman:

Thank you for supporting abstinence education as the optimal health message for youth across America. You have kept your promise to increase funding for abstinence education so that it eventually achieves parity with contraceptive education for teens. Your leadership in this bold endeavor has been greatly appreciated by moms and dads...and teens across the country.

Thanks to your leadership, abstinence education is improving children's lives, by preventing them from a host of physical, social, and financial problems that come from teens having sex outside of marriage.

We are writing to request that you vote against any legislation that does not protect the funding and the funding criteria for abstinence education.

Unfortunately, opponents of abstinence education have been carrying out a strong opposition campaign against the abstinence message. They plan to redefine the funding criteria to ensure that the abstinence message to youth is subverted with information about how to engage in so-called "safe sex." This would send youth a mixed message. Just as needle-exchange messages undermines anti-drug campaigns, so forcing educators to promote contraception while talking about abstinence sends youth the wrong message. Ninety-one percent of teens and 93% of adults think teens should be given a strong abstinence message at least until they are out of high school. We agree.

There are many funding streams for contraceptive education, which permit in-school educational services, but few funding streams for abstinence education — in fact, the current disparity is about 9 to 1. The good news is that numerous peer-reviewed studies verify that abstinence education is working. Fewer teens are having sex or having fewer sexual partners, more teens that have had sex are currently abstaining, teen birth rates have plummeted, and teen pregnancy rates have dropped. This is a tribute to your hard work to promote abstinence education.

Title V abstinence education funding will expire if it is not reauthorized by June 30, 2007. Just as important is preservation of the A-H funding criteria, ensuring that the funds go to true abstinence education programs. Likewise, Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) funding in the Labor/HHS Appropriations bill should be increased in Fiscal Year 2008, in keeping with the current budget proposal, and the current funding criteria must be continued. If these funding criteria are subverted, we ask that you vote against the legislation.

We applaud and appreciate your leadership in helping us provide abstinence education to America's youth.

Sincerely,