

Catherine Jones

Bill Number: 5604

Viewpoint (for/against/neither): For

Wednesday, March 3rd, 202

Testimony:

The importance of pleasure based sex education that is inclusive of all students and doesn't ignore the queer experience cannot be understated. To be frank, my sex education in middle school through high school was beyond insufficient; it was unacceptable. Never were there any conversations centered around gender or sexual orientation, let alone a program that was pleasure based. Teaching sex ed in such a narrow-minded, abstinence-first manner does nothing but harm to the students meant to be receiving an inclusive and well-rounded education. We leave the classroom having barely scratched the surface of sexual health (and only from the straight perspective at that), ashamed of the fact that we are experiencing puberty (which is beyond ridiculous considering it is something that every adolescent goes through), and equipped with misleading information about sexuality, STI's, and resources available to young people in this country. I am a sophomore at Brown University, and every day that I speak to my friend who works for Planned Parenthood, I learn something new that I should've learned in middle school. That is unacceptable. It is simply unrealistic to expect teenagers to practice abstinence only and to expect that every teenager is straight or falls into the gender binary, so giving them a sex education that excludes the broad scope of sexuality and sexual health—that excludes *them*—is irresponsible. Pleasure-based and queer inclusive sex-ed is necessary. I would give anything to go back in time and experience sex ed in a way that prepared me for the real world.