

To the House Education Committee:

My name is Maeve Wiesen and I am a student at Brown University. As Political Director of the College Democrats of Rhode Island and Brown College Democrats, I am writing in support of H. 5604.

Most sexual education courses are woefully limited in their scope. I was in high school only four years ago, and I vividly remember seeing the classic condom on a banana presentation, but what I don't remember was meaningful material about pleasure or true inclusion of same-sex relationships. To learn virtually anything meaningful about that, I had to turn to television and books, and as I think we can all imagine, TV has a lot of exaggerated and unrealistic situations.

Our society and our state has taken a lot of meaningful steps to be inclusive of LGBT youth and ensure that our schools and education are centered around culturally competent curricula. This bill is an essential part of achieving those goals. As it currently stands, minorities often do not see themselves in their sexual education curriculum, and that status quo is not acceptable.

We have sexual education courses for a reason. Time and time again, research has shown that meaningful sexual education helps to prevent STIs and unplanned pregnancy. However, if certain groups of teenagers are not actually learning any useful information, we are leaving them out. I for one, wish that my sex ed had treated same-sex relationships as a central part of the curriculum instead of an asterix at the bottom of the page. Rhode Island should be providing better education for its students.

I strongly urge the committee to vote in favor of passage for House Bill 5604. Thank you for reading and considering my testimony.