

Lisa Cataldi

From: Roberta DiMezza
Sent: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 3:12 PM
To: Lisa Cataldi
Subject: FW: H5604 - Support

Importance: High

From: shannawells1@gmail.com [mailto:shannawells1@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 9:44 AM
To: Roberta DiMezza <RDiMezza@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Craven, Robert E. <rep-Craven@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Ajello, Edith H. <rep-ajello@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Batista, Jose F. <rep-batista@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Bennett, David A. <rep-Bennett@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Caldwell, Justine A. <rep-caldwell@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Casimiro, Julie A. <rep-casimiro@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Corvese, Arthur J. <rep-Corvese@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Felix, Leonela <rep-felix@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Lombardi, John J. <rep-Lombardi@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Noret, Thomas E. <rep-noret@rilegislature.gov>; Rep. Place, David J. <rep-place@rilegislature.gov>
Subject: H5604 - Support

To the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Shanna Wells, and I am a resident of West Warwick, RI. I write today to urge your support of H5604, an act that would amend the current law so that courses in family life or sex education would be taught in grades six through twelve and would be appropriate for students of all races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

As the former Director of the RI Alliance, an organization that seeks to reduce teen pregnancy in RI, I researched the correlation between abstinence-only and other incomplete methods of sexual education and teen pregnancy, dating violence, and sexually transmitted diseases. This research included RI, the United States, and countries around the world.

According to the [Guttmacher Institute](#), a leading research and policy organization committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health, the inadequacy of abstinence-only curricula and the importance of culturally appropriate, age-appropriate and medically accurate sex education that discusses healthy relationships is recognized by multiple provider groups. Experts at the [American Medical Association](#), [Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine](#) and [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#) acknowledge young people's sexual activity and their right to sexual health, and support sex education programs that include these principles. Their positions align with [evidence](#) suggesting that comprehensive approaches to sex education help young people have healthy and responsible relationships. On the flip side, abstinence-only programs do nothing to prepare young people for when they do become sexually active, and systematically ignore the needs of those who are already having sex.

You wouldn't expect a student to understand the totality of mathematics by teach addition only, without teaching subtraction, multiplication and division. In order to raise sexually-responsible citizens, we need comprehensive sexual education that respects the full range of ethnic, cultural, gender expressions, and sexual orientations.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Shanna Wells, M.Ed.
67 Shady Hill Drive
West Warwick, RI 02893
401.837.6241
shannawells1@gmail.com