

Hi Committee Chair MacNamara and committee members,

I am writing to express my opposition to H5837 which would change the current policy of sex education in schools being "opt out" to "opt in" only. Sex education includes topics like healthy relationships, consent, birth control/protection, and STI/STD prevention. These are topics that not all kids are taught at home, and having more information empowers them to be informed on their safety and autonomy as they move into adulthood. Age appropriate sex education does not make kids more likely to be sexually active, but does help to reduce the occurrence of sexual assault and empower them to make healthy choices that can have major life consequences. The bottom line is that teenagers are sexually active, whether or not they receive sex education, but sex education is vital to ensure that they stay safe and healthy during an increasingly confusing time due to social media and online culture.

Limiting education on a topic as important as sex education is being paraded as a parent's right to be in control of what their children learn in school, but in reality, it is promoting christian nationalism and has no place in our public school curriculum. I urge you to oppose the advancement of this bill and continue the current policy which allows parents to opt their children out of sex ed if needed.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heath Francis
Providence, RI Resident