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Your Name: Taytum Camacho

Bill Number: 5604

Viewpoint (for/against/neither): For

Testimony: Change is altering something to make a difference from what it was before. I believe change is most beneficial when used as a tool to improve upon previous ideas and structures.

There is an idea that if you recognize a problem but refrain from doing anything about it then you may be no greater than the perpetrators of the problem itself. I began to notice flaws within my community. One of them being the lack of sexual education for youth which is a shared ignorance towards reproductive rights from our state representatives. I knew that I couldn't just sit back and complain. So, I joined a local youth program set up and ran by Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. By joining, I connected to peers who also wanted to manufacture a change. This program called Students Teaching About Responsible Sexuality (STARS), gave me the tools and knowledge to uplift the people within my community and advocate for myself or others. STARS gave me the opportunity to advocate for a better sex education curriculum that includes teaching youth to understand what consent is, LGBTQ+ inclusive, and a non-judgemental space. Ignorance is a deterrent to the change we want to witness in our community and our country. Through advocacy, we can counteract it and educate those that need it the most. I want to encourage the youth in my state to take action in their neighborhoods and in their environments to enhance them. Sex Ed deserves to be expanded in Rhode Island because I was in my eighth-grade health class when I first learned a lot about sex and by that age those around me were already having sex. Currently, the sex Ed discussed in school isn't inclusive nor non-judgmental to the LGBTQ+ community, who often feel isolated in the discussion of safe

sex. It also excludes the BIPOC communities as well. When sex ed isn't diverse enough to serve the R.I youth, then it will be doing a disservice to students who won't learn about these topics anywhere else.