

## **Abstinence Ed Gets Lopsided Hearing on the Hill**

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(April 23, 2008) In the same week that two new studies confirmed the effectiveness of abstinence education in lowering rates of sexual activity among youth, a pro-abortion Congressman held a biased hearing on abstinence education where the majority of the witnesses favored comprehensive sex education.

The Family Research Council (FRC) says the hearings being held by Rep. Henry Waxman, Chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, are a one-sided affair.

“Waxman is inviting seven witnesses to testify against abstinence education, but only two in favor,” said FRC President Tony Perkins.

“Waxman’s witnesses support children’s sexual and reproductive health services without parental consent, the use of emergency contraceptives over-the-counter, and the radical view that abstinence violates human rights.”

Calling the hearing “biased,” Perkins pointed out that in spite of the enormous amount of money going to “comprehensive sex ed,” recent Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data show that an alarming 40 percent of sexually active teen girls are infected with a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

“It's tragic that elected officials promote sex-ed programs that condone high-risk sexual behavior when it is our youth who suffer the consequences,” Perkins said. “It's equally tragic that Chairman Waxman ignores evidence showing that sexual abstinence is the healthiest behavior for youth.”

The targets of the hearings are the Community Based Abstinence Program and the Title V abstinence state grant program, Perkins said.

“The government does not promote drug use or underage drinking, and it should not promote high-risk sexual behavior either. Abstinence education, not Rep. Waxman's ideology, merits public support. I urge Members of Congress to support President Bush's request for \$151 million for community-based abstinence education programs.”

The hearings took place in the same week that two new studies showing the positive effects of abstinence education programs were presented at the National Press Club. One evaluation showed that abstinence programs cut the rate of sexual activity among students roughly in half. Another study, a comprehensive review of 21 abstinence effectiveness studies indicates that 16 out of the 21 studies found that abstinence programs produce lower rates of sexual activity.

“These findings soundly refute the accusations of backers of comprehensive sexual education programs who claim that abstinence programs are unproven and ineffective,” said Janice Shaw

Crouse, Ph.D, Senior Fellow at the Beverly LaHaye Institute in a written statement.

“Further, the research studies are backed by the social trends that indicate declines in teen sexual activity, teen births and teen abortions. These positive outcomes are good news in a culture where there are over 15 million new cases of STDs every year. “

The first study was published in the *American Journal of Health Behavior* (January/February 2008) by Dr. Stan Weed, Institute of Research and Evaluation. Dr. Weed's study focused on students in Virginia middle schools, and found that abstinence programs cut the rate of sexual activity among students in half.

The second study, authored by Christine Kim and Robert Rector of *The Heritage Foundation* reviewed 21 studies that evaluated the effectiveness of abstinence education and virginity pledge programs and found that 16 of the programs produced lower rates of sexual activity.

“During all the years of condom-based sex education, we have had escalating rates of teen sexual activity, teen pregnancies and teen abortions,” Dr. Crouse said. “Every year some 2.6 million teenagers become sexually active - a rate of 7,000 teens per day.”

In addition to the risk of contracting an STD infection, numerous studies have linked a variety of emotional and psychological problems to early sexual debut in teens.

“Students need to know the basic ‘birds and bees’ information,” Dr. Crouse said, “but, more importantly, they need to have a values-based foundation on which to base the physiological information. And they need to have a clear understanding about the building blocks for a solid and successful future filled with hope and the ability to reach their goals.”

Unlike comprehensive sex education programs, abstinence education programs focus on developing character traits, relationship skills and other life decision-making skills such as learning how to say “no” to short term pleasure in favor of long-term health and happiness.

“Granted, nearly one half of all high school students report that they have engaged in sexual activity. Sadly, for most of them, it is a one-incident affair that leaves them feeling ‘used,’ and the negative emotional and physical fallout of such experiences is well-documented. Our teens deserve better,” she said.

“It is unconscionable that adults would be enablers of that type of sexual initiation.”

The Family Research Council is urging pro-life advocates to contact members of Waxman’s committee to urge strong support for abstinence education and federal funding. Visit <http://oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=1888> for more information.

<http://www.womenofgrace.com>