

Public Hearing Testimony Speaker: Peg Ragaini

Date: 2/29/08 Bill Number: 5591

Good afternoon Senator Gahey, Representative Fleischman, Senator Romara, and Representative Genga, Honorable Senators and Representatives. My name is Peg Ragaini and I am the parent of a 23 year old daughter and a 22 year old son. I live in Brookfield and am enrolled in the MSW program at the University of Connecticut.

I am here today to testify on Raised Bill Number 5591, "An Act Concerning Healthy Teens". I am in strong support of this legislation and am here to urge you to support it.

I would like to speak to you today as a parent whose children are not that long out of their teen years. As any parent of a teenager knows, these are difficult years. Our children are demanding their independence. They are making good and bad decisions and taking risks that keeps their parents up at night. The hormones have kicked in and our children, whether or not they are sexually active, have become aware of their own sexuality. Keeping the lines of communication open is not an easy task for any parent during the teen years. I know that I spent too many hours lecturing when I should have been listening. Our young people need to have adults in their lives that they are able to trust and to share their thoughts. The role of the adult mentor is especially important for our teens as they transition from the role of child to young adult capable of making their own decisions.

What I wanted for my children was for them to have access to accurate medical and health information so that they could make responsible decisions. It is our role as adults in our communities to provide information to our youth so they can make responsible decisions. Sound decision making requires having access to medically

accurate information. Whether it be drug education, nutrition, exercise, or what is commonly referred to as sex ed, I want our young people to have the facts so that when they are in a situation that requires making a choice, they are making an informed decision that includes both their personal values and accurate health and medical information. If we want our children to become productive responsible adults we have to provide the resources they need to make informed decisions.

So, in conclusion, I ask you to vote your support for Bill Number 5591. It is a vote for valuing our young people and respecting their right to have access to medically accurate health information.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.