

Statement of Valeria Barbier

Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, members of the Education Committee, good afternoon. My name is Valeria Barbier and I am a student at Trinity College, here in Hartford.

I am here this afternoon to speak in opposition to Raised Bill No. 5489, "An Act Concerning Secondary School Reform".

Several aspects of the proposed bill trouble me. I am concerned that the proposed bill would require one full credit of "comprehensive health education". I did a little research on the Internet about "comprehensive health education". According to the Centers of Disease Control, the comprehensive health education curriculum should include a unit on "comprehensive sex-education".

Senators and Representatives, my memories of high school are far more vivid and far more recent than yours are. I can tell you that it is not for lack of education and scientific knowledge that we have such problems with teen promiscuity and its consequences: unwed motherhood and STD transmission. Most teens are aware that sex has serious consequences. What they are unconvinced of is their own mortality. The relative ease and comfort of 21st century American life has sheltered from understanding the true fragility of human existence. We can see this in a whole host of risk-taking behaviors prevalent among teens that range from speeding and reckless driving to promiscuity.

No amount of classroom instruction can convince teens that they are mortal. Neither will parental nagging. Only the hard knocks that accompany tough life experiences can persuade teens to avoid risk-taking behaviors.

Additionally, I am bothered that the bill allows the substitution of coursework "offered privately through a nonprofit provider". I am worried that this is a back door for Planned Parenthood to teach health classes. We all know that the cities and towns face serious budget problems. You can bet that they will find it tempting to outsource this program to Planned Parenthood.

Make no mistake about it: if health education classes are outsourced to Planned Parenthood, you can bet Planned Parenthood will use them as a platform to promote promiscuity and abortion under the veil of so-called "safe sex". This is of particular concern, given Planned Parenthood's financial interest in promoting teen promiscuity. Yes, that's right—Planned Parenthood has a financial interest in promoting teen promiscuity. Every year, they make millions of dollars providing abortions to women who are scared, vulnerable, and do not fully appreciate the consequences of their decisions. This bill would provide them with a state-sanctioned opportunity to increase their customer base by promoting promiscuity among our youth.

Completely absent from this "comprehensive" program will be any mention of virtue, self-control, and personal responsibility. In these qualities and behaviors lies the real solution to the problem that the legislature seeks to correct. I hope you will join me in opposing H.B. 5489.