



Monroe County Legislature

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To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
407 County Office Building
39 West Main Street
Rochester, New York 14614

Re: **Memorializing the New York State Senate to pass the Healthy Teens Act**

Honorable Legislators:

Polls show that Americans overwhelmingly support age-appropriate, comprehensive sex education for teenagers, including programs that cover contraception and the prevention of sexually transmitted disease. The need for such education is clear. It is estimated that close to half of U.S. teens over the age of 15 are sexually active, and while the teen pregnancy rate has declined nationwide over the last decade, the U.S. still has one of the highest rates of any developed nation. Even more alarming is the incidence of sexually transmitted disease among young people, with roughly 9 million teens and young adults diagnosed with STDs each year.

Despite these statistics, funding for sex education is scarce, leaving schools and community organizations without the resources they need to develop and implement comprehensive programs. Federal funding is limited to abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula, and funding guidelines prohibit giving students information about contraception, except to emphasize its failure rate.

The New York State Assembly recently passed the Healthy Teens Act (A2856), legislation that would provide funds for comprehensive sex education to school districts, boards of cooperative educational services, school-based health centers, and community organizations. To receive funding, programs would have to be age-appropriate, medically accurate, and substantially involve parents and other adults. Eligible programs would be able to cover topics such as contraception and disease prevention, as well as abstinence. This legislation does not mandate sex education in schools, but gives communities the resources to develop programs that best fit their needs.

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Studies have shown that comprehensive sex education helps teenagers delay the start of sexual activity, and better prepares them for when they do become sexually active. Therefore, I urge you to join me in memorializing the New York State Senate to pass the Healthy Teens Act (same as Uni. S1342) and give teens knowledge they need to make responsible and healthy decisions.

Respectfully submitted,

Carrie M. Andrews
Legislator - District 21

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