

Juneau Youth Services, Inc.

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April 15, 2016

Re: Opposition to Sexual Educator Amendment to HB 156

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition to the recently proposed amendment to AS 14.30.361 in HB 156, concerning sex education, human reproduction education, and human sexuality education. This amendment would require an individual who provides student education on these issues to be a certified teacher under contract with the school and for the curriculum to be approved by the school board.

The proposed change would have a detrimental impact on adolescent students and impose a standard for sex education which is different than for other subjects within our state educational system. The most qualified persons to teach aspects of sex education and reproductive health are community educators and health care professionals including public health nurses, community health workers, peer educators, pharmacists and even doctors. Under the proposed amendment, these individuals would be disallowed from providing education to students on sex education, human sexuality and human reproduction due to lack of a teaching certificate. This will be especially problematic in rural communities where resources are scarce; public health nurses and community health workers are often the only qualified individuals to provide this type of instruction in rural Alaska.

It is well recognized that community professionals can provide important educational information in classroom presentations to students in Alaska. These professionals have been used throughout the state to provide education on such issues as suicide prevention, alcoholism and drug abuse, child sexual assault and interpersonal violence, to name a few. None of these professionals are required to possess a teaching certificate to provide educational information to students. There is no sound rationale for singling out sex education and reproductive health to require a teacher certification, versus all the other subject areas where community professionals are welcomed into the classroom.

Please eliminate the proposed sexual educator amendment to HB 156 as it will do a disservice to our youth, their families, and the community professionals who give their time to help educate students on these important issues.

Sincerely,



Walter Majoros
Executive Director