
From: bellasarah99835@gmail.com on behalf of Sarah Ferrency
<tinkerbellesarah@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2015 9:38 AM
To: Marie Murray
Subject: Testimony opposing SB89

Dear Ms. Murray,

Thank you for agreeing to forward this testimony to the relevant committee, as I had to leave the hearing this morning.

My name is Sarah Ferrency, and I am testifying on my own behalf, from Sitka. I am the mother of two girls, a school principal in the Sitka School District, and I taught Health for over 10 years at our alternative high school. I also just finished eleven years of service on the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood, first of Alaska and then of the Great Northwest after a regional merger.

I am particularly opposed to two sections of this bill, the first requiring parents to opt-in to health education, and the second prohibiting volunteers for abortion providers from providing sexuality education in schools.

I support parents' right to direct their children's education. Parents already have the right to opt out of sexuality education. What the opt-in requirement does is cross the line between parents having the right to choose for their own children, into allowing a minority of parents who oppose school-based sexuality education to choose for all children. The opt-in creates a burden for children of less-involved parents, with the default being no sexuality education at all, while the majority of parents actually approve of and expect this education to take place. This is simply not right.

I would also like to echo previous testimony that this clause puts our most vulnerable children at risk. This bill would require a child who is being sexually abused by her parents- which is more common than any of us would like it to be- to receive permission from that parent prior to receiving safety education identifying his or her abuse. It would consign those children to a life of abuse, eliminating what may be the only opportunity to break that cycle. That is simply unconscionable.

I oppose the clause disallowing abortion providers and their employees or volunteers from providing sexuality education in schools because it appears to be intentionally vague. While the bill sponsor testified that it was not intended to prevent people like me, teachers who volunteer for Planned Parenthood, from teaching Health, the fact is that the language is vague enough that it is likely to be interpreted that way when it is inevitably challenged in court. The bill also does not adequately define "abortion provider." If the true intent is to prevent agencies for whom providing abortion is a "main component" or "the majority" of the work they do, then I request that be defined clearly. I am guessing it will not be specified, because there is no entity in Alaska who would meet that requirement, Planned Parenthood included.

Thank you for considering my testimony and I hope this bill as written does not pass.

Sincerely,

Sarah Ferrency

Daniel George

From: Alta Collins <readertoday2@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2015 9:13 PM
To: GOV.AllLegislators@alaska.gov
Subject: Stop SB 89

Please do not support SB 89. Parents ALREADY have the right to withdraw their students from standardized testing, and to opt out of instruction covering human reproduction.

Passing a broad law to repeat something over which parents already have full options is a waste of time and money. Further, Alaska leads the nation in sexually-transmitted infections, particularly among teens and young adults. Making it more difficult to provide needed information will make the problem worse.

Please do NOT support SB 89.]

Alta Collins
National Board Certified Teacher-Librarian Anchorage School District

Daniel George

From: Ann Robertson <ann.evans.robertson@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2015 7:04 AM
To: Sen. Bill Stoltze; Sen. Lesil McGuire; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: SB 89 Testimony

To the members of the Senate State Affairs committee,

My name is Ann Robertson and I am writing to you today to express my strong opposition to SB 89, which I feel would have adverse consequences on the health of young Alaskans.

I believe a parent has every right to engage with educators and maintain a presence in their child's educational program, but after reading the text of SB 89 it is clear to me that this bill will negatively impact the health of young Alaskans far more than it will benefit their parents.

Alaska suffers from two worrisome sexual health problems: skyrocketing STI rates and rampant sexual assault. The rate of chlamydia infection in Alaska is nearly double the national average; among 15-19 year olds, this rate increases to three times the national average. In 2014, more than two thousand young victims reported child sexual assault to the Office of Children's Services. Additionally, the Office of Adolescent Health reports that Alaskan teens experience intimate partner violence and sexual assault in their relationships at a rate higher than the national average.

The best way to combat these troubling statistics is through comprehensive, accurate reproductive education that provides young Alaskans with the tools they need to maintain healthy relationships and recognize sexual violence when it occurs. Targeting providers of comprehensive sexual education like Planned Parenthood under the guise of parental rights will allow problems like STI rates and sexual violence to persist. Comprehensive sexual education has proven to be effective in delaying sexual activity, reducing STI rates, and preventing unintended pregnancies. We should be making every effort to empower young Alaskans to make healthy decisions, not impeding their ability to do so by enacting legislation like SB 89. When sex education becomes politicized, it is students who suffer the most.

Please join me in opposing SB 89, and withdrawing it from consideration.

Alaska's young people are counting on you.

Sincerely,

Ann Robertson

Juneau, Alaska

Daniel George

From: Dawnell smith <wickedspedia@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2015 1:42 PM
To: Sen. Bill Stoltze
Subject: Public Comment: SB89

Dear Senator Bill Stoltze,

I am writing to oppose SB89. I am representing myself. Please share my comments with your colleagues.

I am a parent of teenage boys. I want them to gain the knowledge, skills and internal resources necessary for understanding reproductive and sexual health and to grow into responsible men with healthy relationships. To me this means honoring consent -- theirs and others -- and knowing how to protect themselves and others from sexual violation, sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

I do not need to reiterate the impact of rape, STDs, FASD and sexual abuse in our state.

Excluding a particular group of well trained experts from presenting an effective sexual health training program in our schools diminishes the knowledge base available to my kids. It further puts into question the way in which the state dictates which community groups can or cannot do participate in our schools.

Keeping effective community resources in our schools improves our education system at low or no cost.

Please vote no on SB89.

Dawnell Smith
Anchorage

Sent by a device smarter than my own good.

Daniel George

From: E CFigus <ecfigus@alaska.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2015 8:42 AM
To: Sen. Bill Stoltze; Sen. Lesil McGuire; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: SB 89

Dear Senators,

My name is Elizabeth. I am graduate student and a Juneau resident. Although I only moved to Alaska 3 years ago, I plan to make this my permanent home. I do not have children yet but I am approaching an age when I may start my own family, and for that reason I am concerned about SB 89.

SB 89 would 1) take away local control from schools by dictating who can and can not present or provide materials to a school, 2) negatively affect the efficacy of sexual health, sexual assault awareness, and healthy relationship education through a mandated parental opt-in policy, rather than the opt-out policies that already exist in schools providing sexual health education, 3) ban Planned Parenthood from providing comprehensive, medically-accurate sexual health education in schools. Planned Parenthood is a trusted, qualified sexual health educator (that has been providing education to communities in AK for 20 years, when invited and tailored to each community based on its needs).

Please join me in turning down SB 89, and we can all look forward to a more educated and healthy future.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Figus
PCCRC/MESAS Graduate Fellow
School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences
17101 Point Lena Loop Road
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Juneau, AK 99801

732-749-0319

Daniel George

From: Kirsten Stanton <okstanton@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2015 8:23 PM
To: Sen. Bill Stoltze
Subject: Please oppose SB89/HB192

As a school nurse, I know first hand the critical importance of children having appropriate sex education. I used to work at Crossroads High School, a fantastic alternative high school specifically for pregnant and nursing high school girls. I could not believe the lack of solid human sexuality knowledge most of these teens demonstrated. Many of the girls, refugees from foreign countries, are the victims of domestic violence, culturally (by their homeland) acceptable child sex trafficking in which young adolescent girls are sold into what I can only call "acceptable slavery," which is then perpetuated by their need to care for unplanned babies.

These children -- yes, CHILDREN! -- are woefully unprepared to become parents. Often the responsible boy leaves the pregnant girl. Early unwanted pregnancy basically is a one-way ticket to poverty and another family needing a great deal of social services. Entitlements. Yeah, that nasty stuff everyone wants to go away.

And this is not just about contraception. It's about sexually transmitted infections: STI's. It is about reproductive health. It is about maintaining the health of the sexual/reproductive organs of both boys and girls. It is about sexual abuse. It is about children who are reaching a peak of sexual exploration. They should know about their bodies and how to keep themselves healthy and safe!

I do not understand is why our nation keeps moving backwards, and this is just another example of that problem. Please do NOT approve this legislation. It is another whack at women's autonomy in planning their own futures!

Kirsten Stanton
Anchorage, AK 99515

Daniel George

From: Robin Boysen <rboysen@gci.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2015 10:18 AM
To: Sen. Bill Stoltze
Cc: Sen. Mia Costello
Subject: Senate Bill 89

Re: Senate Bill 89

Dear Senator Stoltze,

I am a mother, a former high school teacher in both Fairbanks and Anchorage, and have worked in the Public Assistance office in Soldotna. There is no doubt that good education regarding sexual health is a priority for the well being of our society.

Planned Parenthood has been providing this for over twenty years in Alaska and should not be prevented from continuing this very important service.

I personally consider the current attack on all aspects of health care related to pregnancy an attack on women.

Sincerely,

Robin Boysen
5138 Strawberry Rd
Anchorage AK 99502

Daniel George

From: samantha savage <sam-savage@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2015 10:20 PM
To: Sen. Bill Stoltze; Sen. Lesil McGuire; Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Subject: SB 89 Written Testimony

Thank you for taking the time to read my written testimony in opposition to SB 89.

My name is Samantha Savage. Alaska has been my home for the last 15 years, and I am a senior at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I have been an active volunteer for Planned Parenthood for about two years now, in my time talking to people in my community, it has become increasingly clear how important sexual education is to not just Fairbanks, but to the State of Alaska as a whole.

SB 89 is a dangerous bill for several reasons:

It would negatively affect the efficacy of sexual health, sexual assault awareness, and healthy relationship education through a mandated parental opt-in policy, rather than the opt-out policies that already exist in schools providing sexual health education.

It would also ban a trusted, qualified sexual health educator (that has been providing education to communities in AK for 20 years, when invited and tailored to each community based on its needs) from providing comprehensive, medically-accurate sexual health education from schools.

By changing the way we teach sex ed in schools we stand to harm Alaska's children by not arming them with the knowledge they need to make healthy decisions. Alaska not only has some of the highest STI rates in the country, but we 59 out of every 100 women in Alaska has experienced intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence. We owe it to our state's future to do everything we can to help protect them.

Thank you,

Samantha Savage
1443 Gordy Way
North Pole, AK 99705

Daniel George

From: sara kozup <skozup@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 13, 2015 11:16 PM
To: Sen. Peter Micciche; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Bill Stoltze; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Click Bishop
Subject: SB 89 Wrong!

SB 89 creates unnecessary bureaucracy for parents, students, teachers, and administrators. It endangers important federal funding for our school systems.

Parents already have the right ask questions, voice concerns, and remove their children from the classroom if they feel the curriculum is not in their best interest.

We are a state with epidemic levels of sexual violence and sexually transmitted infections. We need a diverse array of partners to create a healthy Alaskan future- including Planned Parenthood.

You are playing political games with our school system and adding administrative overhead to solve a problem where none exists.

Alaskan parents are watching these games you are playing with our children's health and future.

Sara Kozup
2208 Roosevelt Dr. #1
Anchorage, AK 99517
907-744-0741

Dear Chairman Stoltze and Senate State Affairs Committee Members:

I am a 53 year resident of Alaska, wife and mother of 3 children, all of which are recent graduates from the Anchorage School District. I've been involved in advocacy for children in various ways—I've been a CASA as a voice for abused and neglected children, a PTA leader for an elementary and middle school, coached a girls high school sports team and I currently run support groups for domestic violence victims facing custody challenges by theirs and their children's abusers. I am writing to urge that you oppose SB 89, legislation that would jeopardize public schools federal education funding, place undue burdens on our educational system, and make it harder for Alaska youth to access the comprehensive sexual health education they need.

During my children's time in public schools, I took an active role in reviewing course materials involving reproductive health and sex education. There were times when I was concerned about presenters being invited into my children's classrooms. Those presenters I had hesitation about were NOT from Planned Parenthood. The presenters I was most concerned with had a history of providing religiously-biased, medically inaccurate and shame-based programs. I contacted the teachers in advance of the presentations, and expressed my concerns. In one of the first instances in a middle school scenario, the teacher indicated that if shaming, religion and inaccurate information was presented that he would stop the discussion or correct it with his students. In a later instance, the high school students turned the tables on the presenter by challenging their numerous inaccuracies, calling out their bias and asking their teacher to never ask that presenter back again. My point is that although I had parental concerns, I was not afraid of my children receiving differing points of view, sorting through what was opinion versus fact and I had full confidence their teachers would correct any glaring inaccuracies. Had I felt this would not have happened, I was informed of my right as a parent to opt out of these presentations. I chose not to exercise that right because I have raised my children to value facts and science and not be governed by fears based on ignorance. They are lucky children in that they know they can talk to me about anything. Not all kids are as fortunate.

I can assure you that our children need more, not less access to comprehensive sex education. I was appalled at the number of my teen's peers who were dealing with circumstances they could not or would not go to their parents about. Worse were the numbers of teens dealing with unintended pregnancies. One girl, pregnant with twins, drank heavily in hopes of miscarriage. Another nearly died from hemorrhaging in advanced pregnancy, having successfully hidden her pregnancy from friends and parents alike until the bleeding hospitalized her. One girl became pregnant by her step-brother and subsequently dropped out of school. Several girls had children while in high school and others had abortions. A grade-school child only came forward about an uncle's sexual abuse of her after hearing a presentation from STAR. Accurate information about their bodies, healthy relationships and their reproductive health could have helped every single one of these children earlier rather than later.

Stigmatizing Planned Parenthood as "an abortion industry" is politicized rhetoric that does Alaska's children no good whatsoever. Less than 3% of Planned Parenthood's activities involve abortion. I listened to all the hearings since

this amendment was added, and heard further misinformation implying that abortion is a "product", and that Planned Parenthood would push that "product" on unsuspecting teens. This again, is ridiculous fear-mongering not based on fact. Planned Parenthood does more than any other organization in existence in trying to reduce the incidence of STIs and unintended pregnancy. What will be next--will you keep doctors from talking to children about their bodies and their health? Planned Parenthood has consistently provided medically accurate, age appropriate and non-biased information. One of your legislators testified she was shocked about their presentations. I would challenge that she never actually sat in on one. I have, and went a step further by taking their parents course on how to talk to your children. It was excellent. Our kids deserve our help in getting information on how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Trying to score political points by making it harder for students to get the sexual health education they need is no way to govern.

By requiring that parents "opt-in" to any sexual health instruction, as well as social surveys, many kids will miss out on essential education to help them lead healthy lives. Parents can already remove their children from sexual health education in districts that offer such programs. The opt-in requirement will further harm students whose parents are already disengaged with their education, or worse, abusers who don't want their kids to get information on protecting themselves. We all want to encourage parental involvement, but this bill harms more than it helps.

This legislation is disingenuous from the start. It purports to solve a problem that does not exist. Parents could always opt out of standardized testing without penalty, they could always opt out of surveys, and they could always opt out of sex education presentations. This throws up road blocks by requiring opting-in to all of these things, which is far more burdensome for parents and educators alike, and will have lasting harmful consequences by keeping our children ignorant about things that could protect over the course of their lives.

Please add my written comments to the legislative record, as due to scheduling conflicts, I am unable to testify in person. Thank you for considering my strong opposition to SB 89.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paige R. Hodson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paige R. Hodson, SRA
903 W. Northern Lights Blvd., Suite 220
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 274-8258
paigeh@alaska.net