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April 8, 2016

House HSS Committee
State Senate
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Honorable House Health & Social Services Committee Members,

Public School Boards have historically been delegated the authority for the education of its children, including, within the framework of defined state statutes and regulations, both the content and methodology of the delivery of curriculum.

Senate Bill 89 specifically imposes its will on the ability of locally elected school boards to govern based on local interests. The Cordova School District (CSD) opposes SB 89 and encourages you to also oppose legislation that directly negatively impacts the governance role of local school boards.

Below is an excerpt from CSD's Family Life/Sex Education Board Policy (6142.1):

The School Board believes that a wholesome, well-planned sequence of instruction about family life and human sexuality is essential to the general education of all students. Lack of information or pervasive misinformation can cause low self-esteem, increased risk for sexually transmitted disease, unintended pregnancy or sterility, and school dropout. The district curriculum shall help students understand the biological, psychological, social, moral, and ethical aspects of human sexuality....

Parents/guardians shall be notified in writing before students are offered any instruction in which human reproductive organs and their functions, processes, or diseases are described, illustrated, or discussed. This notification shall inform parents/guardians that they may review instructional materials to be used in family life, sex education instruction and that they may request in writing that their child not attend the class. At the parent/guardian's request, any student may be excused from any part of family life/sex education instruction.

This policy, developed and approved by the Cordova School Board, allows for parent review of material to be used as well as an implied practice of communicating how the material is to be delivered and by whom. As noted, parents may choose to have their child excused from participating in said instruction.

Your support in opposing this and any similar legislation is important and appreciated in helping to maintain a school board's governance rights and responsibilities in educating our children.

Thank you for your continued service and support of Alaska's children and communities.

Sincerely,

Alex Russin, Superintendent

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