

April 12, 2016

Good afternoon, Chairman Seaton and H&SS Committee,

My name is Cathy Girard, I represent myself, I live in House District 27, and I am here today to urge you to vote against SB 89, "Parental Rights in Education."

In the 1970's, I had health class, but it wasn't until I was 12 years old (that was the 7th grade for me) that I realized how babies were made...and I didn't find out in health class. I didn't get any sex ed from my mother until I got my period at age 12, which was far too late since my girlfriends and I were already comparing our 9-year old bodies to the Playboy magazines that we pilfered from our fathers' and brothers' private stashes. I grew up in an upper middle class family with two parents, which is atypical for today. Even coming from the "best of families" doesn't guarantee medically-accurate or age-appropriate sexual education. By luck, I was able to make it through high school and college without getting pregnant and because I got my college education, I have always been able to financially support myself.

To me, SB 89 is a classic, unconstitutional example of a conflict between church and state. If Crisis Pregnancy Centers or Alaska Right-to-Life were the organizations teaching sexual education in Alaska's public schools, SB 89 and all of the ongoing anti-Planned Parenthood bills wouldn't be in front of you.

This is my third testimony against this bill, and I am dumbfounded that our state is taking so much time to dicker over a bill that will basically strip sexual education at a time when our state's budget is in crisis. Please remember that the education services Planned Parenthood provides to the schools ARE FREE – not funded at taxpayer expense -- and that the cost of unplanned pregnancies, unwanted children, domestic violence, date rape, breast cancer, reproductive system cancers, and sexually-transmitted infections, don't only come with a personal cost but a SOCIETAL COST. Just ask the 6000 parents of the 3000 children who are currently in foster care in this state.

I am extremely disheartened by the routine, biased, and low-value attacks on Planned Parenthood. Thank you for considering my thoughts today.

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