



April 15, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

Alaska's teachers and education support professionals believe that parents should be able to opt their children out of any standardized tests, so long as there are no penalties for students, teachers, or schools. We believe that parents should have ultimate authority in deciding what material is appropriate for their children. But, as it is currently written, we oppose SB 89 as an undue intrusion of state overreach into the classroom.

SB 89 is a solution in search of a problem, with a healthy amount of red tape for schools and educators thrown in. Our issues with SB 89 in its current form are as follows:

- This is clear state overreach into a domain best managed by local school boards in coordination with parents. State jurisdiction over permission slips is a dangerous precedent to set.
- During committee hearings, **the Department of Education and Early Development indicated that this bill could result in the loss of federal funding for education. Alaska currently receives over \$200 million in federal funds for education.** In this budget climate, that is a risk the State of Alaska cannot afford. We would like more clarification on this issue before this bill becomes law.
- The latest committee substitute for this bill added a provision barring school districts from paying for teacher physicals. This creates yet another unfunded mandate that will come out of teachers' pockets.
- The opt-out provision is written so broadly that schools will need to obtain written permission from parents for almost any "activity, class, or program" that involves human reproduction or sexual matters. Would teachers need to obtain written permission from parents before biology units on reproduction? English Literature lessons? The terms are not defined in the bill.
- The term "employee or volunteer of an abortion services provider" is not defined in this bill. Many healthcare organizations, including hospitals, provide family care. Health teachers and school nurses may volunteer at clinics and hospitals. Would anyone who works or volunteers in a hospital be banned from teaching sex education in our schools? We believe this section should be removed from the bill.

Thank you for hearing the concerns of Alaska's 13,000 teachers and education support professionals. If the Legislature were to bring forward a clean standardized testing opt-out bill, we would be able to support it. But SB 89 raises too many questions for students, teachers, and schools.

Sincerely,

Ron Fuhrer
President



March 18, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of NEA-Alaska's 13,000 members, I am writing to express my concerns about Section 4 of the current CS of Senate Bill 89, which would create a new statute shifting the costs of mandatory physical examinations on to teachers.

Under current state law, teachers are required to complete a physical examination when they are first hired by a district, with a reexamination every three years. State regulation 4 AAC 06.050. then states that additionally: "A district may require a physical or other examination at any time or at more frequent intervals at its expense." There is nothing in current state statute or regulation otherwise requiring school districts to pay for the costs of physical examinations.

We believe the current law is working – school districts across the state approach this issue differently, with locally tailored approaches that best suit their needs. In some cases, teachers' health insurance will cover the cost of a physical examination. Some school districts do not reimburse for the costs of state-required physical examinations. Others offer partial reimbursements – the Sitka School District, for example, reimburses teachers up to \$150 for physical examinations except for the examination required for initial employment. Some rural districts, where access to physicians can be limited, cover the full cost of obtaining physical examinations.

Physical examination reimbursement policies in place at the local level have been set up by those school districts, in consultation with local school boards, teachers, and school district employees. If districts wish to change their reimbursement policies, those changes can also be decided at the local level, with no new state statutes. Overall, Section 4 of Senate Bill 89 as written is overly restrictive, and binds the hands of school districts that may want to continue to offer reimbursements for teacher physical examinations – particularly those rural districts where access to physicians is limited.

Alaska's teachers pay for many things out of their own pockets for their classrooms and their students – we believe that a state mandate to require teachers to pay for their own physical examinations is not needed at this time.

Thank you for taking the time to review my concerns.

Sincerely,

Ron Fuhrer

NEA-Alaska President

Janet Ogan

From: Judy Andree <jagster42@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2016 2:21 PM
To: Rep. Wes Keller
Cc: Rep. Liz Vazquez; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Jim Colver; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Opposition to SB 89 & SB 191



The League of Women Voters
A Voice For Citizens, A Force For Change

March 18, 2016

Dear Representative Wes Keller, Chair of the House Education Committee,

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) strongly opposes both SB 89 and SB 191 based on the long-established (1983) League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) Position on Reproductive Choices which states the following: The LWVUS “believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right to privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.”

In addition, the LWVUS Position on Health Care supports “a basic level of care that includes . . . prenatal and reproductive health.” This basic care for reproductive health can have far-reaching positive effects including healthier babies and stronger and more financially stable families. Prenatal and reproductive care can also save public monies. The Guttmacher Institute reports that in 2010, Title-X supported reproductive health services resulted in a net savings in Alaska of \$17.9 million due to the prevention of unintended or closely spaced pregnancies, low birth weight babies, STD transmission, and cervical cancer cases.

This type of success is possible only when sexually active men and women have access to sound medical information and medical care. To ban the use of a Title-X funded reproductive health facility from teaching young men and women simply because in some cases they also provide, with private funding, abortion services is unwise. Such facilities have as one of their main purposes the prevention of unintended pregnancies.

And who might know better the difficulty in having to end a pregnancy than those who work with families facing that most difficult of decisions. It is a decision best left to a woman and her health care provider; it is a very private and personal and painful decision. Preventing the need to make such a decision is the goal of all women’s health clinics.

Those who oppose the teaching provided by Title-X funded reproductive health workers should experience the classes taught by them. Those parents who are uncomfortable with a science-based approach to sex education can always opt-out. But to most parents, education is not an activity to be avoided, especially when it comes to the important area of reproductive health.

LWVAK strongly urges the members of the Alaska Legislature to reject both of these bills.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hetty Barthel, Secretary

League of Women Voters of Alaska

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Janet Ogan

From: Melissa Engel <pastor.engel.ak@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 18, 2016 10:48 AM
To: Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Liz Vazquez; Rep. Jim Colver; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: Please Oppose SB 89

Dear Representatives Keller, Vasquez, Colver, Talerico, Seaton, Drummond, and Spohnholz,

I am writing to you today to ask you to oppose SB 89.

As a United Methodist pastor and youth director in Juneau, Alaska, I am concerned with the health of the temple of the soul: the body and having the tools and education for our young people to make the choices they want to make about their bodies. Just this past year, I was trained in a comprehensive sex education course called Our Whole Lives which has a supplemental faith component for grades 7-12. In that class, I was appalled to find out that my hour of sex education in sixth grade did not help me to make the choice I wanted to make for my own body. I wanted to be abstinent. That's what I desired; yet, without good sex education and the knowledge that there are three kinds of sex (not just vaginal), I was not given the tools to make such a choice. At age 27 (my current age), I had to reconcile myself with the fact that I indeed wasn't abstinent. So many kids do want to make the choice to be abstinent but they need good, age-appropriate, comprehensive sex education in order to have the tools and information to make such a choice.

I view SB 89 as an attack on Planned Parenthood, one of my partners in ministry. Planned Parenthood's Teen Council was willing to come and talk with their peers in the Juneau Youth Ministry Cooperative about healthy relationships and red flags in unhealthy and potentially abusive relationships. These conversations were vital to the growth of my ecumenical Christian group of young people, grades 6-12. Teen Council is a group of peers who give age-appropriate, comprehensive, medically-accurate sexuality education to their peers in the school, and I must say, they do an amazing job at opening up space for tender conversations that could be difficult and awkward. This information is vital as they go forward as people in the world. What an opportunity to empower a new generation with the information they need to make healthy choices about their bodies and their relationships!

That is why I ask you to help equip our young people with comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education and to oppose SB 89.

Thank you for your time and energy serving as our state representatives.

Blessings and peace,
Rev. Melissa Engel
Douglas Community United Methodist Church (Douglas, AK)

Janet Ogan

From: Ann and Ron Keffer <annronkeffer@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 15, 2016 7:12 AM
To: Rep. Wes Keller
Cc: Rep. Liz Vazquez; Rep. Jim Colver; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Harriet Drummond; Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Subject: SB89

Chairman Keller,

I want to express my strong opposition to SB89. For 38 years I was a public school teacher, assistant superintendent, and principal. My experience with teenagers tells me this bill is a very bad idea and actually will damage the lives of many students. Providing the kinds of information that this bill seeks to suppress is one of the very best steps any school can take for its students. In fact, I truly cannot imagine, after seeing the positive effects of health classes over many years, why anyone would create a bill that seems to me to be a radical departure from common sense as well as a step in a direction that we determined long ago is just wrong.

At heart, the bill attempts to keep important knowledge away from students at just the time of their lives when they need it most. Knowledge is a threat because it enables individuals to make their own informed decisions, when others want very much to restrain their ability to decide. In this light, this bill is an egregious bit of government overreach and undemocratic as well. Please defeat this terrible piece of legislation.

Ronald L. Keffer

P.S. Welcome aboard Representative Spohnholz!

Ann and Ron Keffer
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annronkeffer@gmail.com

Testimony in Opposition to SB89
March 14, 2016

My name is Nithya Thiru.
I am representing myself.

In high school, I was in a sexually abusive relationship. It was my first relationship, and I stayed in it for four years. My parents are from South Asia, and cultural barriers prevented me from being able to approach them for information about healthy relationships. They had no concept of what American dating might look like, having had an arranged marriage themselves.

I was provided very few resources at school.

It wasn't until graduating from high school that I became aware of the resources available, and was able to gain the knowledge and strength I needed to leave my abusive relationship.

Planned Parenthood, as well as schools can provide valuable support to those faced with abuse. Especially in a place like Alaska where abuse is so prevalent, limiting access to such resources is a disgrace to our state, and is a grave disservice to young people who are currently suffering and need our help. Planned Parenthood offers professional counseling, support, and resources where families cannot. A parent's ability to help can often fall short due to a lack of objectivity.

The abuse I suffered stripped me of my sense of self. Had my school provided more resources regarding sexuality, and healthy relationships, I believe I would not have waited so long to leave the relationship that I was in.

We need to empower and inform our youth, and not strip them of their ability to make informed decisions about their personal health.

Please stand against SB89, and don't perpetuate the cycle of abuse.

Thank you for your time.

Janet Ogan

From: Robin Smith <ericrobin@alaska.net>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2016 5:47 PM
To: Rep. Wes Keller
Subject: Testimony against SB89 in House Education

Parents find dealing with their teen's sexuality difficult. We don't want them hurt or find themselves in difficult situations having an unintended pregnancy. Girl or boy STIs including HIV can be life changing.

Many parents simply ignore it or barely touch the surface. That is why over the past 20 years, in survey after survey, local, state or national, 80 to 85 percent of parents indicate they want their children to receive comprehensive, medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education. Parents see such courses and content as supplementing, not supplanting, their discussions at home. They say that their children need both to be taught about delaying the onset of intimate sexual relationships until they are mature and responsible and also given the information and skills they need to use condoms and contraception when they do choose to become sexually active. It's not either/or, but both.

Studies consistently show that comprehensive sex education is highly effective at reducing STIs, delaying initiation of sexual activity, and lowering teen pregnancy rates. The state of Alaska has failed to do its job by not providing comprehensive, accurate evidenced based sex education. We have no state standard curriculum, no requirement for even providing it. And now--no money to offer it even if we wanted to.

Teens report that their main source of information about sex, dating and sexual health comes from what they see and hear in the media. That includes TV, movies music videos, reality shows, beer ads, on line porn, and video games.

Social media is another problem. Girls are pressured to send naked selfies to boys. We are appalled to hear that oral sex has become the new kissing. We pray that isn't true in Alaska. We simply want to lock our kids up until they're adults. But we can't and we mustn't be blind to what is actually happening.

These are some of the national Facts from GreatSchools.org and CommonSenseMedia.org

72% of teens think watching TV with a lot of sexual content influences their peers' behavior somewhat or a lot.

Programs with sexual content average 4.4 scenes per hour.

On average, music videos contain 93 sexual situations per hour, including 11 hard-core scenes depicting behavior like intercourse and oral sex.

Between 1998 and 2005, the number of sexual scenes on TV nearly doubled.

1 in 5 children will be approached by a sexual predator online.

15-to 24-year-olds account for nearly half of all STD diagnoses each year.

Watching a lot of sexual content on TV and listening to sexually explicit music lyrics increase the chances that a teen will have sex at an earlier age.

60% of female video game characters are presented in a sexualized fashion.

The biggest users of online pornography are 12-to 17-year-old boys.

Schools are already overwhelmed by state mandates. Now we have a PE teacher or biology teacher attempting to teach sex education. They can barely say the word vagina and breast, let alone answer question about how to set boundaries, whats normal and if they are going to have sex what are the contraceptive options. Its not simple.

Planned Parenthood has been a trusted provider of sexual health education in Alaska for more than 20 years and throughout the country for 100 years. Communities turn to us for nonjudgmental, unbiased, medically accurate curriculum on reproductive health and relationships.

We should not deny our teens important sexual education simply because some legislators do not approve of legal abortion or those who provide it.

Please oppose SB89.

Janet Ogan

From: Gary <alaskagary@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2016 2:03 PM
To: Rep. Wes Keller
Subject: testimony on SB89 to House Education Committee

Testimony to House Education Committee from 3/14/16 from the Anchorage LIO:

My name is Gary Snyder. I teach high school in the Anchorage School District and have two daughters in school. I am representing myself.

Specifically I teach high school biology and a healthy relationships and sexuality education course that was designed by our local school district. My goal as a teacher is to improve the lives of my students, helping to turn them in to productive members of society.

I ask that you table SB89. We need more sexuality education in schools, not less. Make no mistake, SB89 will put up a barrier to teaching sex ed in schools. Changing opt options for parents to opt in requirements will discourage teachers from pursuing sex education. Since I teach sex ed I know this. I'm the guy who notifies parents about sexuality lessons now. I'm the guy who gets permission slips now. I share lessons with parents. I put my lesson plans on a blog for parents. So I know how these activities add to a teacher's workload. This bill will further discourage teachers from teaching sex ed. They simply won't do it. Teachers have enough hurdles in the job as it is. For the most part it is already like this, and not much sex ed is taught in our high schools. SB 89 will make it even more difficult to teach sex education.

I am not sure about the sponsors of SB89 but on my job I actually talk to hundreds of students about sex. The fact is most of them get very little sex education and they want it. Every year I ask students how many of their parents have "the talk" with them about sex. Consistently it is about 20%. So 80% of my students have parents who don't talk to them about sex. This is reality. Where do these other 80% learn about sex, if not from there parents or school?

Well, we know the average age that an American male types "porn" into the internet is age 11. We know the average age of first intercourse in the United States is between 16-17. Whether we like it or not, or whether we approve of it or not, by age 18 60% of our students have been sexually active. SB89 won't fix that, but some of us sex educators are trying to.

We need sex education in schools to fill in the gaps between the porn world and real sexual activity. Kids need good sex education in schools to learn about the consequences of their sexual decisions. They need it to learn about their anatomy and hormones and pregnancy. They need it to learn about consent and abuse. They need it to learn about assertive communication skills and to practice articulating their own values about sex. And they need to learn about contraceptives. Porn does not teach them these things. The sponsors of SB89 are not teaching them about these things. 80% of parents are not teaching about these things. Please do more to encourage more sex education in our schools. Do not put up more barriers. The language of SB89 will put up a huge barrier to sex education in our schools. As New York sex educator Al Vernacchio puts it, “Letting kids learn about sex through porn is like teaching them to drive by watching Fast and Furious.” We can do better than this.

Teachers like myself are trying to help students navigate a difficult, complicated world with real information about sex. Parents can already preview any curriculum and remove kids from any lessons. They already have those abilities. All SB89 does is puts up a huge barrier to sex education, make no mistake. This is not good for kids.



STATE of ALASKA

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Written Testimony for the Record:

Pages: 5 w/cover

TCN: 465-3818

Committee: House Education

Date: 3/14/2016

Bill Number(s): SB 89

Subject(s): Parents Rights: Abort, Parental Limits School

Please enter my testimony into the record.

Mary Norwalk
Testifier's name (s):

Self
Representing (opt.)

PO Box 1275 Bethel, AK 99559
Address

545-5250
Phone

POB 1275

Bethel, AL 35559

March 14, 2016

House Education Committee

SB89: Parent Rights Public Testimony

I. As a concerned citizen, and a former, advanced nurse practitioner in women's health care. Specifically, I would like to provide this written testimony for consideration by the House/Senate Committee, lawyers, health care providers, social services, educators (pre-early to post-college graduates), public/private schools, medical/nursing schools, medical/nursing/laboratory schools, etc, etc.)

II. Sexual education is an important part of health care education for numerous reasons. Without it, it is not a complete part of informed patient education.

III. There are numerous health conditions that can be acquired from lack of sexual education: a) STDs b) Unwanted pregnancies c) disruption of education endeavors d) neglected/abused children e) post-traumatic injuries f) personal/family/church/school/psychological, etc. maladjustment g) suicide/homicide h)

including i) hunger, j) Misuse of money, k) intentional or intentional passing on of sexually transmitted diseases, & l) ETC

IV. He stated, & foremost, purposes of the 2016 Legislative Session is to stop mismanaging, and reduce the already shrinking monetary means. Everyone should realize that the price of a barrel of oil will not be what it used to be. The Misuse of the existing monetary means will NEVER reduce the ever-growing debt either. However, Bill Walker, Vice Governor, Byron Mallot, and Compassionate Legislators should NOT be blamed for the budget shortfall. He invited the Messed-up budgetary problems from their predecessors. They are doing very well in seeking solutions, and rather than criticized, they should be applauded.

V. Suggestions: a) Please work together like adults who care in resolutions of the slavery problems that are discussed year after year. b) Listen to speakers. c) Legislators who have been quiet, please speak up. d) if there is honesty, and human understanding, and compassion you'll never go wrong.

VI. Representatives Don Sadden, and Rep. Hottel have

nothing to complain about — I feel they moved to Alaska, and sought public positions for the benefits that living in Alaska offers, and the benefits that the elected positions offer. It is at the expense of clients, who are in monetary need for reasons that they can't see, or even begin to imagine that we are the ones suffering for the need of a) housing b) STDs, poor health of all sorts, c) frustration, expensive travel/room and board, d) fallen through cracks that emerging from them often seems impossible. Mr. Gatter, those of us who have physical disabilities/serious stigmas live where we are — how dare you suggest that we move to the lower forty-eight states. If I suggest that you move back to the state where you came from (or your ancestors), how would you feel? Mr. Gaddler, don't you dare say again — how we should spend our meager dollars — we do very well in deciding how best to spend that, and make hard decisions every day about what we can do without.

Guyana Cabrel, Cin-gag Koroat Cypit Taria-
 Men's ikeag rem ipte ki Cuxiput, Ganerjagaput,
 tamput, para tebus teput, uheppit Mallin.

(4)

pat, ikayunangulatit teng-er luki -- aki nang
replirpegnata! Nau-gga kanesteci?

Sincerely,

Ms. Mary C. Nasawak

(Ms. Mary C. Nasawak)

Cell ph. # 907.545.5250

Message ph.: 907.545.4421

Janet Ogan

From: Robin Smith <ericrobin@alaska.net>
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2016 5:47 PM
To: Rep. Wes Keller
Subject: Testimony against SB89 in House Education

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