

Testimony in Opposition of House Bill 293

House Health Committee

Representative Barbara Boyd, Chair

December 2, 2009

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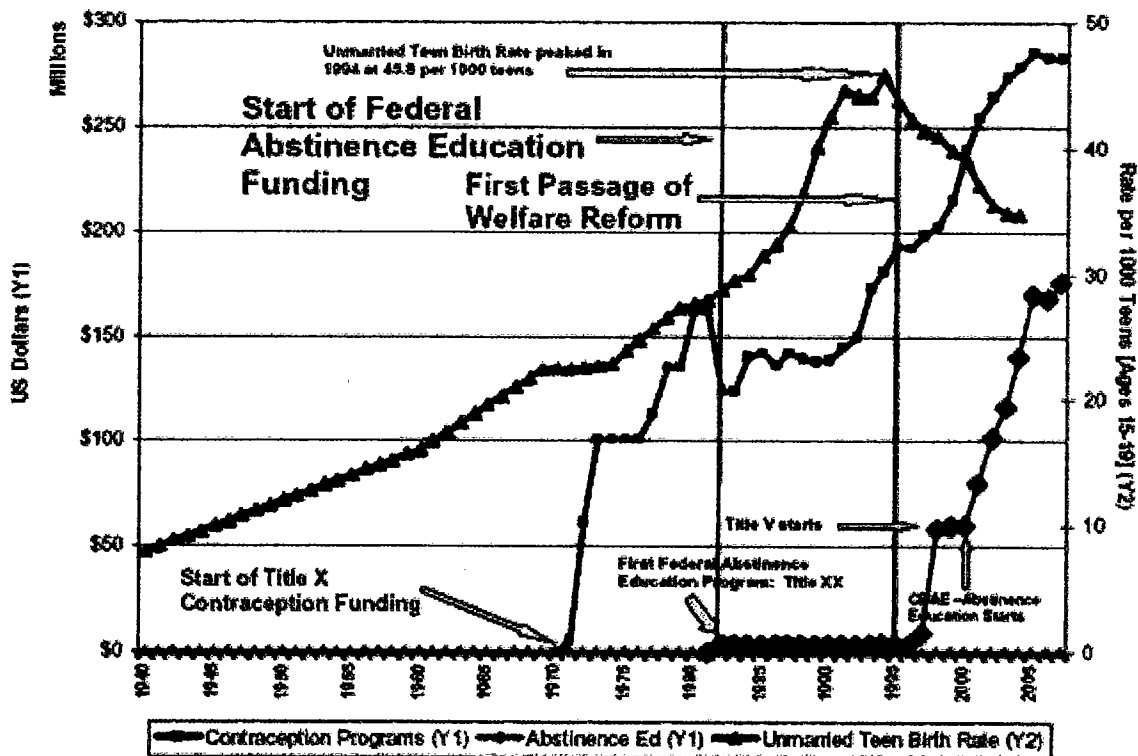
Madam Chairman, Vice Chair Carney, Ranking Minority Member Wachtmann, and Committee members:

Abstinence education is a vital part of our youth's development. I am an abstinence educator and I see firsthand how this message of truth brings so much hope to our youth. I see teens from all walks of life, I even work with girls in the Scioto correctional facility, and they all have one thing to say after hearing our message, that it is a message of hope, not judgment, a message of truth and that they can strive for the best regardless of their past experiences. The abstinence education program that I represent along with other programs that I know about are medically accurate and have proven success of decreasing teen pregnancies and STD rates, which in turn saves our whole society MILLIONS of dollars. According to analysis released by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy in 2004 taxpayer costs for teen pregnancy were \$ 9.1 billion. The estimated cumulative public costs of teen childbearing between 1991 and 2004 totals \$ 161 Billion. Costs in Ohio from 1991 to 2004 were \$6.9 billion. The teen birth rate in Ohio declined 36% between 1991 and 2004 saving Ohio taxpayers an estimated \$300 million in 2004 alone. This decrease in birthrates often directly corresponds with the availability and implementation of Abstinence education programs in our schools.

As noted in the chart below the out-of-wedlock teen birth rate has steadily increased from 1940 to an all-time high of 45.8 per thousand teens in 1994. In 1970, Family Planning dollars were introduced at

the federal level and have increased almost continuously. Much lower funding levels for abstinence education began in the 80s and did not increase until the Federal Welfare Reform Act of 1996. From the time that abstinence dollars began to increase, making more abstinence programs available across the nation, teen birth rates started a sharp decline. One observation made recently by one of our educators regarding the reports that the teen pregnancy rates had increased this past year. She noted that if the teen birth rates were the highest in 1994, the children born to those mothers would be 15 this year, and unfortunately, history often tends to repeat itself (60%) hence, the increase in teen births.

### Contraception & Abstinence Education Funding Compared to Unmarried Teen Birth Rates – 1940-2007



Source: CDC NCHS Data 2007

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ATM Education is one example of an abstinence education program that is evidence-based and very effective. ATM Education has served over 200,000 students since 2002. ATM is evaluated by the Applied Research Center of Miami University, Middletown, Ohio under the direction of Robert Seufert,

Ph.D. A random sampling of evaluations produced 23,166 matched pre- and post-surveys that serve as the basis of this report. Some examples of profound results are programming in Allen County. In 2004 the rate of Chlamydia was 342 cases (all ages), in a matter of two years that rate came down to 112 in 2006. The teen birth rates in that county went from 31.3 per 1000 teens in 2002, to 26.1 per 1000 teens in 2006. Being in a financial down turn as it is, any measure to remove a law that when properly implemented saves millions of dollars is unthinkable. Not only are we saving society millions, we are saving our youth from lies and hurt.

Students need to understand the emotional attachments and bonding that can cause devastation especially in young girls' lives if they are not married when they have their first sexual experience. Sex affects the whole person. To explain this we spend a lot of time in the classroom explaining the groundbreaking research on oxytocin and vasopressin which are two hormones that are released in the body during sexual activity. This produces a chemical bond between people physically, emotionally and visually. When we say we want to save our youth, we mean it. We want to protect them physically, but also emotionally, so that they are best prepared for their own future families. We want to build a culture of understanding and responsibility; we understand the need for responsible fathers who will be there for their children. Teaching our youth the importance of making responsible decisions now and abstaining from behaviors are harmful to them increases their success and gives them self esteem.

We work with a lot of high risk youth, and what we hear from the opposition is that these types of youth need contraceptives because they will not get proper education from home. Abstinence education programs, not only teach high risk youth the facts about STDs and all the associated risks, but teach them how they can change their behaviors so that they don't repeat the same things for their future families. A quote from one student in Allen County who went through our program; "This program

really made me think about not having sex or having only one sexual partner because I don't want any diseases and I plan on having kids and I don't want my kids to be affected with a disease that I got".

Abstinence Education provides accurate information, which discusses STDs, the true reliability of contraceptives, character development, sexual abuse and how to build strong relationships that can last for a lifetime. I urge you to keep abstinence education as a mandate in our youth's education.