

Date: Friday, Feb. 13, 2015

To: Kansas House Committee on Education

From: Rev. Dr. Robin McGonigle,
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Wichita, KS 67226
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Re: HB 2199

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing about my concern for HB2199. As a minister in Kansas for 30+ years, I have grown to appreciate the necessity of sex education in the public school. In ministry, I have learned what the *lack* of knowledge about sexuality and reproduction has cost the taxpayers and individuals alike. There is knowledge “on the street” available to every child and teen. But that knowledge is, at best, is sketchy and incomplete, and at worst, false. Unintended pregnancy is only one of the costs. Various sexual diseases is another cost.

As a minister, I have accompanied more than one teenager to the doctor to get birth control, find out if she is pregnant or infected with an STD, and I have even been with a couple as they had an abortion. These are tragic events that affect a person for life. Sex education is a key piece of reducing the numbers of people who have to deal with these things.

Unfortunately, not all parents are good teachers. And sexuality is a topic that is taboo and uncomfortable in many homes. If we change our educational policy to an “opt in” sex education process, **the families who need this the most will likely not receive key information**. Knowing the “three R’s” is vitally important. But having an awareness of the changes in one’s own body, the process of puberty, and the risks of intercourse are also critical.

Leaving this essential education to the fate of each school district and only to students whose parents are willing to write a note is absolutely **a step backwards** into the dark ages of Puritanism. The effects of such a decision will be cumulative, including:

- early and unintended pregnancies,
- an increase in sexually transmitted diseases,
- an increase in misinformation on the street
- a decrease in personal hygiene and self-esteem
- a decrease in the use of safe sex tools (i.e. condoms, etc.)

By adopting this bill, you open a whole new group of children who will be misinformed, uneducated, and left to their own devices to deal with their own sexuality.

Please do not support this bill. It will be destructive and tragic for the children and youth of Kansas.