

Testimony of Rev. Karen L. Robu
Associate Minister, Plymouth Congregational Church, Wichita, KS
Opposing House Bill 2199
House Education Committee
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I am greatly concerned with House Bill 2199 which takes the control of sex education away from local school districts, threatens to restrict young Kansan's access to sex education, and risks criminalizing teachers who accidentally show sex education material to the students not opted in under the new rules.

I am a mother, and educator who believes knowledge is key to preventing teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual abuse. The following is from a Pew Research Think Tank article from April 14, 2014. It asks the question, "Why is Teen Birthrate Falling?" I believe it proves that when we empower our young people with knowledge they are able to make healthier decisions for themselves.

"What else is contributing to the decline in teen birth rates? Less sex, more contraception and more information.

For one thing, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of never-married teenage females who ever had sex, from 51% in 1988 to 43% in 2006-2010, according to National Survey of Family Growth data. Furthermore, among never-married teens who have had sex, 78% used a contraceptive method the first time they had sex, 86% used contraception during their most recent sex and 20% used dual methods (e.g., a hormonal method and a condom) during their most recent sex, all significant increases since 1988.

Pregnancy prevention programs and messages directed to teens may also have played a role. A recent Brookings report found that the MTV programs 16 and Pregnant and Teen Mom, reality TV shows that follow the struggles of teen mothers, may have contributed to up to a third of the decline in teen births since they began airing in 2009."

In addition to being a mother and an educator I am also a minister. As such I believe human beings have been created in the image of God and that being human is a good thing. Healthy, age-appropriate, sexual relationships are a part of being human. I believe young people should be taught comprehensive sex education that promotes healthy relationships, and teaches them to respect themselves and others. We need to equip our youth with accurate information that helps them to clarify their values and allows them to make informed decisions.

Respectfully,

Rev. Karen L. Robu
Associate Minister
Plymouth Congregational Church
202 N. Clifton
Wichita, KS 67208
karenrobu@yahoo.com