

Congregation Beth Torah

Rabbi Rick Shapiro D.D.

February 12, 2015

To the Members of the Kansas Legislature:

I am writing to offer testimony concerning House Bill 2199 which would establish a state-wide policy requiring parents to opt-in for their children to receive sex education in our public schools.

In 1987, the Central Conference of American Rabbis – the association of more than 2,000 Reform Rabbis in the United States and around the world, and an organization with which I am affiliated – passed a resolution urging the inclusion of sexuality education in public schools at all age levels. We made this decision based upon finding that the availability of accurate information about reproduction, sexually-transmitted diseases, and contraception has been proven to have a positive impact on curbing adolescent pregnancy and the incidence of sexually-transmitted disease.

If HB 2199 becomes law, no sex education would become the state-wide default posture for our schools, and as a result, our most vulnerable young people will frequently not have access to the information they need to stay healthy. From personal experience, both with my own children as well as with the children in the congregations I have served, I know how valuable sex education is, and would not want to see it withheld from today's children. I urge you, therefore, to defeat HB 2199 and instead to take all measures to insure that all Kansas children grow up with a healthy knowledge of their bodies. Without a doubt, this is the surest way to a healthy society.

Sincerely,



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Interim Rabbi

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