



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 26, 2011

Special Update: Joint Committee on Education Hearing - 9/20/11

On Tuesday, September 20th, the Joint Committee on Education held a hearing that included the Healthy Youth Bill (H. 1063/ S.190). Our expert witnesses provided key testimony about the importance of providing honest, non-judgmental, medically accurate, and age-appropriate information to the youth of the Commonwealth:

- **Meg Bossong**, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, Community Mobilization Project Manager, outlined how failing to do so places young women and men at greater risk of experiencing or perpetrating sexual violence and unhealthy relationships
- **Sumru Erkut**, Wellesley Centers for Women, Associate Director and Senior Research Scientist, outlined the effectiveness of programs teaching about both abstinence and contraception– along with self-esteem and negotiation skills – compared to the failure of programs focused solely on abstinence
- **Atsuko Koyama, MD, MPH Fellow**, Boston Medical Center , Pediatric Emergency Medicine, spoke passionately about the young women and men she sees in her practice – and the sharp contrast in health behaviors and reproductive health issues facing those who receive good instruction and those who do not
- **Robin LoConte, M.S.**, Health Quarters, Manager of Youth Development Initiatives did a spectacular job outlining the need for schools that decide to teach sexuality education to be provided guideposts as to what that curriculum should look like.

Our lead sponsors, **Rep. Jim O'Day and Senator Katherine Clark** also presented great testimony, along with their freshman colleague **Rep. Paul Brodeur**. The three of them hit on all of the key relevant points, including debunking the top myths – noting that this is retains both local control and parental rights – and spoke about how this directly impacts them as parents. Witnesses from both the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action and the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee also testified.

A special thank you to the following organizations and individuals who also provided testimony for the committee:

Organizations

- AIDS Action Committee
- American Association of University Women
- American Civil Liberties Union, Massachusetts
- Boston Area Rape Crisis Center
- Health Care For All
- Hyde Square Task Force
- Jane Doe, Inc
- Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy
- Massachusetts Asian and Pacific Islanders for Health
- Massachusetts Association for School Based Health Care
- Moshie Kavod House
- NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts
- National Organization for Women, Massachusetts Chapter
- Our Bodies, Ourselves
- Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts

- ROCA

Individuals

- Dr. Catherine Samples, Children's Hospital
- Dr. Atsuko Koyama, Boston Medical Center
- Diane Blake, Planned Parenthood
- Hung Nguyen, Charlestown Student

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