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SENATE BILL 5306

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State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Senators Weinstein, Rockefeller, Pridemore, McAuliffe, Shin, Fairley, Prentice, Keiser, Regala, Brown, Kline and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/19/2005. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to sexual health education; adding a new section to  
2 chapter 70.24 RCW; and creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that it is a public  
5 health priority for young people to acquire the knowledge and skills  
6 necessary to make responsible, fully informed decisions about their  
7 sexual health. The legislature also finds that recent declines in the  
8 rate of pregnancies and some sexually transmitted diseases can be  
9 associated with the success of comprehensive, medically accurate, and  
10 age-appropriate sexual health education. Despite these gains, youth in  
11 Washington are confronted by the realities of high rates of teenage  
12 pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection.  
13 These diseases can have lifelong consequences, including infertility  
14 and HPV-associated cancer, and are frequently asymptomatic, creating a  
15 silent epidemic among youth in our state. The state has a duty to  
16 ensure that young people are equipped with the comprehensive, medically  
17 accurate, age-appropriate information that they need to protect  
18 themselves from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases,  
19 including HIV infection. The best approach to protecting youth in this

1 environment is to support the resources that they trust and to ensure  
2 that young people have as much accurate, objective information about  
3 sexual health as possible.

4 Young people rely upon many educational resources for obtaining  
5 information about sexual health. The cornerstone of this education is  
6 at home with parents and guardians. These responsibilities also extend  
7 to schools, peers, religious organizations, and other community groups.  
8 These entities must work together to equip young people with the sexual  
9 health information that they will need to make responsible decisions  
10 throughout their lives. This information must emphasize the  
11 effectiveness of abstinence from sexual activities as well as the wide  
12 range of other methods for preventing teenage pregnancy and sexually  
13 transmitted diseases, including HIV infection.

14 The standards offered by the January 2005 guidelines for sexual  
15 health information and disease prevention of the department of health  
16 and the office of the superintendent of public instruction are a  
17 fundamental tool when designing sexual health education. These  
18 guidelines will be used to guide teachers, guest speakers, and school  
19 districts with the design of their sexual health education and may also  
20 be helpful to guide health and counseling providers, community groups,  
21 and parents and guardians to better meet the needs of the communities  
22 that they serve.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 70.24 RCW  
24 to read as follows:

25 (1) Every school district that offers sexual health education must  
26 incorporate the January 2005 guidelines for sexual health information  
27 and disease prevention of the department of health and the office of  
28 the superintendent of public instruction. Every school district that  
29 offers sexual health education must emphasize abstinence, as required  
30 by RCW 70.24.210, except that abstinence may not be taught to the  
31 exclusion of other methods of preventing teenage pregnancy and sexually  
32 transmitted diseases, including HIV infection. In addition to  
33 abstinence, sexual health education must teach medically accurate  
34 information about the effectiveness of contraceptives and other family  
35 planning options in a comprehensive manner.

36 (2) Instruction and materials shall be age-appropriate and

1 appropriate for use with students of all races, genders, sexual  
2 orientations, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds and students with  
3 disabilities.

4 (3) Within available resources, the superintendent of public  
5 instruction and the department of health shall make the January 2005  
6 guidelines for sexual health information and disease prevention and any  
7 related model policies, curricula, or other technical assistance  
8 resources available to teachers, health and counseling providers,  
9 community groups, and parents and guardians.

10 (4) The department shall adopt such rules as are necessary to  
11 determine what is medically accurate information according to the  
12 research conducted in compliance with scientific methods and published  
13 in peer-review journals.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** This act may be known and cited as the  
15 healthy youth act of 2005.

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