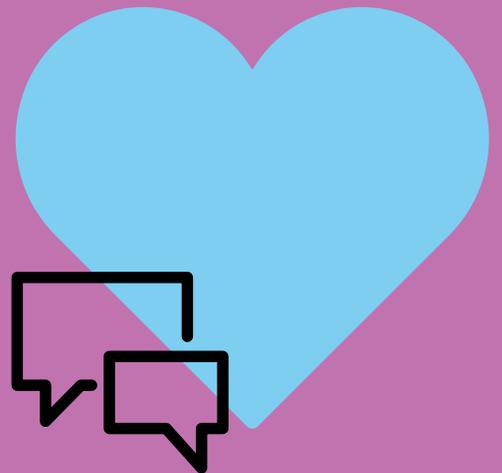


Healthy Youth Act.

Lobbying Toolkit



Questions? Contact advocacy@pplm.org

Healthy Youth Act.

Respect. Consent. Prevent. 

Thank you for visiting your state representative to lobby about the *Healthy Youth Act*! It is critical that your lawmaker hears from you about the importance of comprehensive sex education in your community. In this toolkit, you'll find all the tools you need to have a successful lobbying experience:

- **Lobbying 101** provides instructions to set up your meeting
- **Talking points** will guide you in your conversations with your state representative
- **Social media guidance** will help you put this experience on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- **Reporting form** can be returned to us or filled out online and it helps us keep track state representatives' positions on the *Healthy Youth Act*
- A packet of information for your state representative, including a **summary** of the *Healthy Youth Act*, **infographic**, **polling memo**, **research document**, and a **news clipping from the Boston Globe**

If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach out to your Healthy Youth Coalition Organizer at advocacy@pplm.org. We're happy to help in any way!

Thank you for taking action!

The Healthy Youth Coalition 

#HealthyYouthAct #RespectConsentPrevent

Lobbying 101

1. SCHEDULE A MEETING OR DROP IN

Look up your state representative at malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator. Call their office to schedule 15 minutes to meet with the representative or a staff person. You can also drop by their state house or in-district office. Bring your friends too!

2. MAKE A STRONG INTRODUCTION

"I'm from Attleboro and one of your constituents. I'm here today to talk to you about why the *Healthy Youth Act* is important to me."

3. HIGHLIGHT THE MESSAGE

Hand the representative their *Healthy Youth Act* information packet, included in this toolkit. "Representative, in this packet you'll find information about the bill, important messaging and talking points, and polling data showing that Massachusetts voters overwhelming support comprehensive sex ed."

4. MAKE IT PERSONAL

Are you a parent? A student? An educator? An advocate? "I'm here today because, as a high school senior, I'm going to college next year knowing that 1 in 5 women on college campuses are sexually assaulted. I believe that if a school is going to teach sex ed that curriculum must include information about consent and this bill would guarantee that."

5. MAKE YOUR ASK

"Will you show your support for the *Healthy Youth Act* by asking Leadership to bring the bill to the House floor for a vote?"

DON'T LEAVE THE MEETING WITHOUT

- ✓ Thanking your representative for taking the time to meet with you
- ✓ Giving them their packet and your signed petitions
- ✓ Making "the ask"!

Date _____

Lobby Visit Reporting Form

Fill out one form per meeting with a representative. Return this info to advocacy@pplm.org. If you prefer to fill out this form electronically, visit bit.ly/hya-lobby.

Your name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Did you bring anyone with you to your meeting? If so, write their names here:

Name of your legislator: _____

Name of the legislator's staff person in meeting: _____

My legislator or the staff person I met with said they _____ the *Healthy Youth Act*.

support

do not support

are undecided or were unable to speak on behalf of
the legislator about

Did your state representative commit to asking leadership to bring the Healthy Youth Act to the House floor for a vote?

YES

NO

Did they commit to making sure consent and LGBTQ inclusivity are included in the final version of the bill?

YES

NO

Were there any questions you didn't know how to answer? If so, write them here:

General meeting notes:

Building healthy, safe communities begins with our youth.

The **Healthy Youth Act** would give young people in Massachusetts the foundation they need to lead secure, productive lives. The legislation would:

- Ensure districts that offer sex education teach age-appropriate, medically accurate information;
- Require those districts to teach consent, the benefits of delaying sex, how to build healthy relationships, and how to prevent pregnancy and STIs when a person does have sex;
- Require the curricula used be LGBTQ-inclusive
- Continue to allow parents and guardians to take their children out of school-based sex education.

The Healthy Youth Act: Why now?

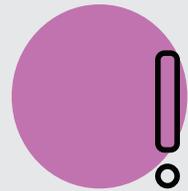
No one should have to say
#MeToo,
especially our young people.



Nine percent of Massachusetts teens reported experiencing non-consensual sexual contact in 2015. We must combat sexual assault at its roots.

STI rates

are on the rise in Massachusetts, and young people are disproportionately affected.

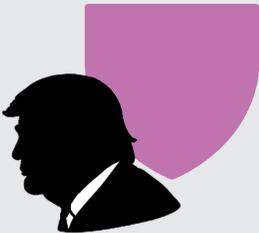


In 2015, 62 percent of chlamydia cases and 41 percent of gonorrhea cases were reported among young people ages 15 to 24. Young people do not have the tools to stay safe and healthy.

The Trump administration is pulling

\$200 million

from evidence-based curricula that prevent teen pregnancy. Instead, he is investing in programs proven to be ineffective, like abstinence-only and "fertility awareness" initiatives.



LGBTQ youth

are disproportionately impacted by STIs and sexual assault.

Comprehensive sex education is inclusive of all gender identities and sexual orientations and recognizes LGBTQ youth health needs.



What is the Healthy Youth Act?

The *Healthy Youth Act* would ensure every young person who receives sex ed learns how to build healthy lives, relationships, and communities.

Comprehensive sex education teaches medically accurate, age-appropriate information. Unlike its alternatives, comprehensive sex education is actually proven to:

- ✓ Delay the initiation of sex;
- ✓ Reduce the frequency of sex, the number of partners, and unprotected sex;
- ✓ Increase the use of condoms and contraception;
- ✓ Lower STI and unintended pregnancy rates;
- ✓ Reduce bullying for LGBTQ youth;
- ✓ Enhance students' overall ability to learn.

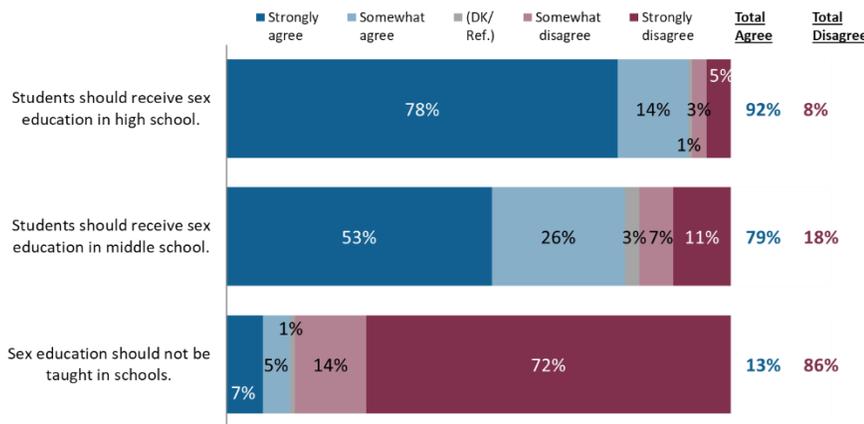


TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Jane Rayburn, Director – EMC Research
RE: Attitudes of Massachusetts Registered Voters
DATE: February 9, 2018

The following findings are from a telephone survey conducted June 20 – 29, 2017, of 1,020 randomly selected registered voters in the state of Massachusetts. The results have an overall margin of error of ±3.1 percentage points and were weighted to reflect the demographics of registered voters in the state. The survey was conducted by live interviewers and included both landlines and cell phones.

Key Findings:

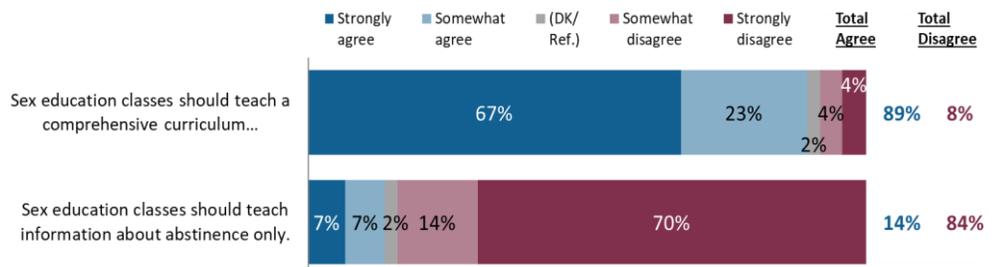
Opinions on Sex Education in Schools



Voters strongly believe that sex education should be taught in schools. More than 75% of voters *strongly agree* that students should receive sex education in high school. Support is also strong for students receiving sex education in middle school; a majority of voters strongly agree with that policy. Eighty-six percent (86%) of voters are against the notion that sex education should not be taught in schools.

When it comes to the curriculum that sex education in school should cover, voters strongly agree that a comprehensive approach to sex education is necessary, compared to an abstinence-only curriculum. This comprehensive approach includes educating students on the benefits of abstinence, as well as information about how students can stay healthy should they choose not to abstain. Two-thirds (67%) of registered voters *strongly agree* with this balanced, comprehensive approach. Seven out of ten voters (70%) *strongly disagree* that sex education should be information about abstinence only.

Opinions on Sex Education Curriculum



Support for comprehensive sex education curriculum in schools is consistent across the state. Across various parts of the state, more than half of voters *strongly agree* that the curriculum for sex education should be comprehensive. More than 3-in-4 Boston voters *strongly agree* that sex education classes should teach a comprehensive curriculum. At least two-thirds of voters in Barnstable, Hampden, Middlesex, and Worcester Counties express similar sentiments.

Number of cases Row percent	Total %	Region							
		Barnstable County	Bristol County	Essex County	Hampden County	Middlesex County	Plymouth County	Worcester County	City of Boston
		n=39 4%	n=82 8%	n=118 12%	n=70 7%	n=233 23%	n=81 8%	n=121 12%	n=91 9%
Strongly Agree: Sex education classes should teach a comprehensive curriculum...	67%	66%	64%	58%	71%	70%	63%	67%	77%

Comprehensive sex education curriculum also garners support across party lines and religious backgrounds. A majority of Republican voters *strongly agree* that comprehensive curriculum should be taught, and that support is even higher among both Unenrolled and Democrat voters. Religious affiliation does not affect support for comprehensive sex education in schools; it is strongly supported by voters across the spectrum.

Number of cases Row percent	Total %	Party Registration			Religious Affiliation			
		Dem.	Rep.	Unen./ Other	Protestant	Catholic	Other religion	No pref./ (DK/Ref.)
		n=373 37%	n=126 12%	n=521 51%	n=215 21%	n=391 38%	n=130 13%	n=284 28%
Strongly Agree: Sex education classes should teach a comprehensive curriculum...	67%	70%	55%	67%	63%	65%	66%	72%

Research

Youth enrolled in abstinence-only programs were no more likely than those not enrolled in the programs to delay sexual initiation, to have fewer sexual partners, or to abstain entirely from sex.

Trenholm C, et al. *Impacts of Four Title V, Section 510 Abstinence Education Programs Final Report*. Princeton, NJ: Mathematic Policy Research; submitted to U.S. Dept. Health & Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2007.

Teenagers who received some type of comprehensive sex education were 60 percent less likely to get pregnant or get someone else pregnant.

Kohler, Pamela K., et al. "Abstinence-Only and Comprehensive Sex Education and the Initiation of Sexual Activity and Teen Pregnancy." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2008, pp. 344–351.

To date, no abstinence-only program has been proven through rigorous evaluation to help youth delay sex for a significant period of time, help youth decrease their number of sex partners, or reduce STI or pregnancy rates among teens.

"Comprehensive Sex Education: Research and Results." *Future of Sex Education, Advocates for Youth*, 2009.

Comprehensive sex education curricula help young people to delay sex, build healthy relationships, and prevent STIs and unintended pregnancies when they do become sexually active.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *Emerging Evidence, Lessons and Practice in Comprehensive Sexuality Education: A Global Review*, Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015.

In a rigorous literature review of 26 comprehensive sex education programs, 14 demonstrated a statistically significant delay in the initiation of sex.

13 programs showed reductions in the number of sex partners and/or increased monogamy among program participants.

13 programs showed statistically significant declines in teen pregnancy, HIV or other STIs.

"Sex Education and Other Programs That Work to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, HIV & Sexually Transmitted Infections." *Advocates for Youth*. 2008.

LGBTQ-inclusive curricula led to lower rates of bullying in California schools.

Snapp, Shannon D., et al. "LGBTQ-Inclusive curricula: why supportive curricula matter." *Sex Education*, vol. 15, no. 6, 2015, pp. 580–596.

Statistics

Relationships & Wellbeing

- 9.2 percent of Massachusetts high schoolers reported having ever had sexual contact against their will. That rate soars to 24 percent for gay, lesbian, or bisexual students.
- 8 percent of Massachusetts high schoolers reported being forced to do things of a sexual nature in the past year by someone they were dating.
- 9 percent of Massachusetts high schoolers reported being hurt by someone they were dating. Younger teens are even more vulnerable, with 16 percent of Massachusetts middle schoolers reporting the same experiences.
- 48 percent of gay, lesbian, or bisexual high schoolers reported seriously considering suicide in the past year, compared to 11 percent of heterosexual high schoolers.
- 25 percent of gay, lesbian, or bisexual high schoolers reported having attempted suicide in the past year, compared to 5.2 percent of heterosexual high schoolers.

Sexual Health

- Just 52 percent of Massachusetts high schoolers reported being taught how to use condoms in school.
- 60 percent of Massachusetts high schoolers reported not talking with parents about sexuality or prevention of HIV, STDs, or pregnancy in the past year.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Department of Public Health. *Health & Risk Behaviors of Massachusetts Youth. 2015.*

STI Rates

- 23,913 cases of chlamydia were reported in Massachusetts in 2015, increasing 57 percent from 2006.
- 62 percent of chlamydia cases were reported in 2015 by adolescents and young adults, ages 15 to 24.
- 3,683 cases of gonorrhea were reported in Massachusetts in 2015, an increase of 52 percent since 2006.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences. *2015 Integrated HIV/AIDS, STD, and Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Report. 2015.*

The Boston Globe

EDITORIAL: Sex ed in Mass. overdue for an overhaul

MAY 16, 2018

It's an uncomfortable discussion that few students, teachers, or parents want to have. But the troubling lack of uniform, up-to-date sex education in Massachusetts needs attention from the Legislature.

The state's problems are twofold: Sex education standards are outdated, and they are also optional.

The Legislature can quickly solve the first half of the problem by requiring updated standards for those public school districts that choose to offer sex ed. And it's at least worth discussing a more difficult step: Whether Massachusetts should also join the 24 other states that make some form of sex ed mandatory in all public school districts.

Current standards, adopted in 1999, allow districts to teach an abstinence-heavy curriculum. It's not clear that any of them actually do — the state doesn't track districts' curriculums — but revised standards should rule out that option. Ample research shows that sex education programs for youth based on abstinence don't prevent unintended teen pregnancies or reduce sexually transmitted disease. On the contrary, teaching kids just to delay sex until marriage actually has been correlated to higher rates of teenage pregnancy and births.

The Healthy Youth Bill would require that standards for teaching sex education in public schools include comprehensive, age-appropriate, and medically accurate information. That includes teaching the benefits of abstinence and delaying sexual activity, along with the use of contraceptives and other barrier methods to prevent pregnancies and infections if one does have sex.

A bill to modernize the sex education curriculum appears ready to die a quiet death in the Legislature for the fourth session in a row.

The bill leaves it to districts to choose a curriculum that meets those standards. "It could be a one-day seminar, it could be four weeks, or the duration of the school year," said Jennifer Childs-Roshak, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts. "There's a lot of flexibility built into the legislation."

The bill, sponsored by state Representatives Jim O'Day and Paul Brodeur, and state Senator Sal DiDomenico, would make sure that schools with sex ed programs are teaching consent to youth and the skills necessary for a healthy relationship. "What is affirmative consent? Kids sometimes really don't know how to disengage in a healthy manner," said O'Day.

Opponents of the legislation argue that sex education belongs in the home and is the responsibility of parents. Except that teens are not talking about sex at home, according to the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey. And the bill would allow parents to opt their children out of sex ed classes, as they can now.

The legislation deserves passage. But is it enough? The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases is rising in the state, with young people especially at risk. The growing awareness of sexual assault on campus has made it clear that many of the messages that sex ed classes are meant to teach aren't getting through.

Along with the new standards proposed in the Legislature, the state should also start tracking how many schools are teaching sex ed at all. Getting a better grasp of what is actually being taught — or not taught — in schools across the Commonwealth would help the state determine whether further steps are needed.