

## Dismantling Sex Education in Missouri

*[Sen. Moon's amendment](#) to [SB 55](#) is dangerous and extreme attempt to stigmatize sex education. It would dismantle sex education in Missouri.*

### **Senator Moon's amendment to SB 55 is a sweeping attack on students' access to information about human sexuality.**

- The requirement for schools to proactively document parental approval before providing any information about human sexuality in any setting is impractical and designed to gag teachers, coaches, counselors and administrators.
- The creation of criminal and civil penalties makes it clear: the goal of this amendment is to silence any conversation about human sexuality in Missouri schools.

### **Every student deserves the information and skills they need to understand their bodies, make empowered decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, and sustain healthy relationships.**

- We all agree that parents and families should be a young person's first resource for sex education. The reality is that not all young people have parents or guardians who are willing or able to have these necessary conversations. **For many young people**, school-based sex education is their only opportunity to receive this vital information.
- Comprehensive sex education works. Compared with students who receive abstinence-only education (sometimes called "sexual risk avoidance"), students who receive comprehensive sex education wait longer to have sex, have fewer partners, and use condoms and contraception more often.
- Leading public health and medical organizations – including the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics – all stress the need for sex education that includes messages about abstinence and provides young people with information about contraception for the prevention of teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Every national, state and local poll on sex education shows that parents, teens and the general public overwhelmingly support comprehensive sex education that includes information about birth control, abstinence, healthy relationships and STI prevention.

**We all want to keep young people safe. Stigmatizing and limiting access to sex education doesn't do that.**

- We can ensure that young people in Missouri are protected and able to make healthy, informed decisions about their bodies and relationships by making sex education available to them, not by restricting access to critical information.
- Overwhelming research shows that well-designed and well-implemented sex education programs can decrease sexual risk behaviors among teens, including delaying sexual intercourse, increasing condom or contraceptive use, reducing the number of partners, and decreasing the frequency of unprotected sex.

**Sex education is vital to the health and well-being of young people. This amendment risks eliminating students' access to sex education classes as well as information about human sexuality in ANY class completely.**

- Like most states, Missouri currently has an "opt-out" policy – which ensures more young people receive the clear benefits of sex education while leaving the ultimate decision to parents who can opt out.
- "Opt-in" policies create unnecessary hurdles that keep students from accessing the sex education they have a right to receive – and this is no accident. **"Opt-in" policies are designed to make accessing sex education in schools more difficult**, overlooking the fact that parents and guardians have a say under *both* opt-in and opt-out policies.
- Requiring parents to actively opt-in to any mention of human sexuality would put Missouri in the most extreme and restrictive position in the country, making it impossible for many students to receive the education they need to make informed, healthy decisions.
- This amendment will negatively impact young people who do not live in traditional one- or two-parent households or whose parents or guardians are not readily available to review yet another school consent form. Even when a parent or guardian does consent to their children's participation, the permission form may not reach them or may not be turned in.
- Requiring parental consent prior to any discussion of human sexuality would put a heavy burden on schools and staff time, taking time and resources away from the important and more pressing aspects of school administration.