

October 26, 2009

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Inouye and Cochran and Representatives Obey and Lewis:

As you move forward with conference of the Fiscal Year 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill, on behalf of the undersigned local, state, and national organizations committed to the health and well-being of our nation's young people, we urge you to follow-through in eliminating funding for all abstinence-only-until-marriage programs and funding the most comprehensive prevention initiative possible.

We are encouraged that both chambers of Congress agreed with the President in eliminating funding for existing abstinence-only-until-marriage programs and, in their stead, funding more comprehensive approaches to sex education. **We fully support this shift from funding ineffective abstinence-only-until-marriage programs to spending federal funds on an evidence-based and comprehensive approach to sex education.** After more than 25 years and more than \$1.5 billion of wasteful spending on ineffective abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, Congress has the opportunity to meet the needs of all young people by crafting a program that includes information about both abstinence and contraception and addresses the root issues that help teens make responsible decisions and keep them safe and healthy.

The House provides a total program funding level of \$114.455 million while the Senate funds the initiative at only \$104.455 million. **We urge Congress to fund the program at the higher funding level.**

We need to invest in a holistic approach that provides all of our young people with comprehensive, medically accurate, and age-appropriate sex education that helps them reduce their risk of unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The House bill focuses exclusively on funding teen pregnancy prevention programs while the Senate bill takes an appropriately broader view and supports funding for "improving the reproductive health and well-being of young people" through efforts aimed at both reducing unintended teen pregnancy as well as STIs, including HIV. **We strongly urge Congress to enact a broad initiative that addresses unintended teen pregnancy, as well as STI, and HIV prevention.**

We are also concerned about the sustainability of the initiative should it remain administered exactly as the competitive abstinence-only-until-marriage grants program has been administered. Furthermore, the initiative must address the often unmet and interrelated health needs of adolescents and be linked to public health outcomes. Therefore, **we urge Congress to follow the Senate language and ensure that the new initiative is invested in multiple agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).** The Senate directs funding to be a collaboration between HHS agencies including ACF, CDC, and OPA and we fully support this inter-departmental approach. The agencies within HHS all have a role to play in ensuring that this new teen initiative is as successful as possible and is able to be implemented effectively by public and private entities, as indicated in both the House and Senate versions of the bill. It is essential that they all work together and collaborate on this public-health driven program.

Congress is well on its way to acting in the best interest of young people by supporting public health and education policies that are comprehensive, rooted in the best science, and reflect mainstream values. We urge you to finalize the strongest possible initiative that will meet the needs of all young people and will be sustainable in the long term.

If you would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to be in touch with William Smith at the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) at (202) 265-2405 or Marcela Howell at Advocates for Youth at (202) 419-3420.

Sincerely,

ACT UP Philadelphia (Philadelphia, PA)
ADAP Advocacy Association (aaa+) (Washington, DC)
Advocates for Youth
AIDS Action Baltimore (Baltimore, MD)
AIDS Action Council
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families
AIDS Foundation of Chicago (Chicago, IL)
The AIDS Institute
AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania
AIDS Task Force of the Upper Ohio Valley (Wheeling, WV)
AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland (Cleveland, OH)
ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal
Alliance For Full Acceptance (Charleston, SC)
Alliance for Living (New London, CT)
Allies Linked for the Prevention of HIV & AIDS (a.l.p.h.a.) (Boise, ID)
American Association of University Women
American Association on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
American Civil Liberties Union
ACLU of Kansas and Western Missouri (Kansas City, MO)
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District IX (Sacramento, CA)
American College of Sexologists
American Humanist Association
American Journal of Sexuality Education (Easton, PA)

American Psychological Association (Washington, DC)
American Public Health Association
American School Health Association
American Social Health Association
Answer
Arizona Women's Alliance
Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (Akron, OH)
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)
Black Women's Health Imperative
Caare Inc. (Durham, NC)
CAEAR Foundation
California Association of School Health Educator (CASHE)
Cascade AIDS Project (Portland, OR)
Catholics for Choice
Center for Inquiry
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Women Policy Studies
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Chicago Foundation for Women (Chicago, IL)
Chicago Women's AIDS Project (Chicago, IL)
Chicago Recovery Alliance (Chicago, IL)
Christian Association at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA)
Christiana Care Health Services HIV Program (Wilmington, DE)
Coalition for Responsible Sex Ed (Minnesota)
Coastal Bend AIDS Foundation, Inc. (Corpus Christi, TX)
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity & Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Community Access National Network
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project (CHAMP)
Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network (CHAIN)
Concord Feminist Health Center (Concord, NH)
Core Center RMR (Chicago, IL)
Family Equality Council (Boston, MA)
Family Planning Council (Philadelphia, PA)
Feminist Majority
First Reformed Church (Schenectady, NY)
Florida Healthy Teens Campaign
Frannie Peabody Center (Portland, ME)
Gay & Lesbian Medical Association
Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC)
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
Georgia Parents for Responsible Health Education
Girls Inc. (Washington, DC)
Greater Bridgeport Adolescent Pregnancy Program, Inc (Bridgeport, CT)
Harlem United (New York, NY)
Harm Reduction Coalition (New York, NY)
Health & Education Alternatives for Teens, SUNY Downstate Medical Center
(Brooklyn, NY)
Health Services Center (Anniston, AL)

Healthy Kids Rhode Island
Healthy Teens Connecticut Coalition
Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation, Inc. of Massachusetts (HOPE)
HiTOPS (Princeton, NJ)
HIV Medicine Association
HIVictorious, Inc. (Madison, WI)
Human Rights Campaign
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health
Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality (San Francisco, CA)
International Women's Health Coalition
Latino Community Services, Inc. (Hartford, CT)
Law Students for Reproductive Justice
Lifelong AIDS Alliance (Seattle, WA)
Living Room, Inc. (Atlanta, GA)
Look Both Ways, Inc. (Loveland, CO)
Lower New York Consortium (New York, NY)
MANA Volunteer (Manchester, CT)
Mary Wohlford Foundation
Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy
Mautner Project: The National Lesbian Health Organization
Metropolitan Coalition for Responsible Sex Education (Kansas City, MO)
Metropolitan Community Churches (Sarasota, FL)
Minnesota AIDS Project
Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting
Missouri AIDS Task Force
Nashville CARES (Nashville, TN)
National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Jewish Women, California
National Council of Jewish Women, Connecticut State Public Affairs
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association (NFPRHA)
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Latina Health Network
National Pediatric AIDS Network (Boulder, CO)
National Sexuality Resource Center
National Youth Advocacy Coalition
Needle Exchange Program of Asheville (Asheville, NC)
New Mexicans for Responsible Sexuality Education (NMRSE) (Albuquerque, NM)
Northwest Suburban NOW (Arlington Heights, IL)
Pacific Institute for Women's Health (Oakland, CA)
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) National
Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative (Chicago, IL)
Pennsylvania Coalition to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
Pennsylvania NOW, Inc.

People For the American Way (Washington, DC)
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health
Project Inform
PWA Coalition of Dallas, Inc./AIDS Services of Dallas (Dallas, TX)
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of Connecticut, Inc.
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of New Mexico
Religious Institute
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Republican Majority for Choice
Response (Skokie, IL and Prairie View, IL)
Rhode Island NOW
San Francisco AIDS Foundation (San Francisco, CA)
San Gabriel Valley/Whittier NOW Chapter of NOW (Southern CA)
Secular Coalition for America
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
Sierra Club
New Jersey Chapter Sierra Club
Society for Public Health Education
The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality
South Carolina HIV/AIDS Council
Southern AIDS Coalition (Birmingham, AL)
Southern Nevada Young Women's Collaborative (Boulder City, NV)
Southwest Center for HIV/AIDS (Phoenix, AZ)
Southwestern PA AIDS Planning Coalition (Pittsburgh, PA)
St. Philip House, Inc. (Plainville, CT)
Teen Talk Sexuality Education (Redwood City, CA)
Texas Freedom Network
Total Health Awareness Team (Rockford, IL)
Transgender Law Center
Treatment Action Group (TAG)
Trinity College Women & Gender Resource Action Center (WGRAC) (Hartford, CT)
Twin States Network (Guilford, VT)
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
Unity Wellness Center (Auburn, AL)
Vermont Committee for AIDS, Resources, and Education
West Alabama AIDS Outreach (Tuscaloosa, AL)
Women of Reform Judaism
WOMEN'S WAY (Philadelphia, PA)
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
YWCA of the Hartford Region (Hartford, CT)

Cc:

House Appropriations Committee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Majority Leader Harry Reid
Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi