HELP ENSURE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE:

SUPPORT the Reauthorization of the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) and increased funding for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI) and the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH).

ELIMINATE federal abstinence-only-until-marriage (AOUM) programs by repealing the Title V “Abstinence Education” program and end funding for the Competitive Abstinence Education (CAE) grant program.

COSPONSOR the Real Education for Healthy Youth Act (REHYA), HR 725/S 372, and the Repealing Ineffective and Incomplete Abstinence-Only Program Funding Act (Repeal Bill), HR 3774.

People of all ages, and particularly young people, have the need for and the right to sexual health information to help them take personal responsibility for their health and well-being throughout their lives. While U.S. teen pregnancy and birth rates are declining, disparities persist and the country continues to have the highest rates among comparable countries. Further, HIV, and other sexually transmitted disease (STDs) data show the need for increased support:

- Young people ages 13-24 account for over one-quarter of the estimated 50,000 new HIV infections diagnosed each year, with even higher rates among young men of color who have sex with men.
- Every month, 1,000 young people between the ages of 13 and 24 acquire HIV in the U.S.
- Half of the nearly 20 million estimated new STDs each year occur among 15-24 year olds.

COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION

Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) provides evidence-informed, medically accurate and complete, and age- and developmentally-appropriate sexual health information inclusive of, and responsive to, the needs of all young people. Taught by trained educators throughout a student’s school years, CSE includes such information as human development, abstinence, contraception, disease and pregnancy prevention, as well as skill development for healthy relationships and decision-making. CSE provides adolescents the essential knowledge and critical skills needed to avoid HIV, other STDs, and unintended pregnancy. Programs that include information about abstinence and contraception are effective in helping young people delay sexual activity and increase contraceptive use when they do have sex. Professional health organizations, the general adult population, and parents agree that young people should receive CSE.

EVIDENCE-BASED CRITERIA

Evaluating evidence is key to implementing effective sexual health programs. Evidence, however, must be paired with young people’s right to complete sexual health information and services, so they are equipped with the full breadth of scientific information available as it applies to their own experiences and applicable to their pursuit of healthy lives. To ensure federally-funded adolescent sexual health promotion programs are effective and uphold the rights of young people, these programs should undergo a multi-pronged review to ensure not just their efficacy in improving health outcomes, but that they are also medically accurate, age- and developmentally-appropriate, and adhere to inclusive content standards before they are added to any federal agency list of evidence-based programs.
The following are ways members of congress can strengthen and expand access to existing sexual health promotion programs and advance comprehensive sexuality education.

**SUPPORT ADOLESCENT SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMS: STRENGTHEN PREP, TPPI, & DASH FUNDING**

Congress provides funding for evidence-based, medically accurate, and age-appropriate sexual health promotion and/or education programs through the authorized PREP program and two annually funded programs, TPPI and DASH. While not strictly providing CSE, PREP and TPPI programs provide critical sexual health information—plus adulthood preparation in PREP—to young people through states, community and faith organizations, and public and private entities. DASH provides invaluable assistance in ensuring quality sexual health education, linkage to health care, and safe and supportive environments in our nation’s schools.

- Expand the number of effective sexual health education programs and the number of young people reached—especially vulnerable youth—with the information and skills to make informed and healthy decisions by supporting the reauthorization of PREP through FY 2019; TPPI funding of $130 million and $8.5 million in evaluation funds; and $50 million for DASH, including $3 million for evaluation, in FY 2015.

**ELIMINATE FEDERAL ABSTINENCE-ONLY-UNTIL MARRIAGE PROGRAMS: END CAE FUNDING & REPEAL TITLE V AOUM**

Since 1982, more than $1.7 billion in federal dollars has been spent on ineffective and shaming AOUM programs. While these funding streams have been reduced over the last four years, a total of $55 million was allocated for the Title V AOUM program and the CAE grant program in FY 2014. Both programs must adhere to a strict definition of “abstinence education” that prohibits teaching young people about the benefits of condoms and contraception, and fails to respond to the needs of young people who are already sexually active or engaged in same-sex relationships. Continued funding of these programs ignores not only experts’ advice and years of studies demonstrating such programs’ ineffectiveness, but also undermines most parents who support more comprehensive approaches to sexual health education.

- Eliminate federal funding for the ineffective, exclusionary, and harmful CAE and Title V AOUM programs that have no place in the annual federal appropriations or in public law.

**COSPONSOR COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION & ADOLESCENT HEALTH PROMOTION BILLS: HR 725/S 372 & HR 3774**

The *Real Education for Healthy Youth Act* (REHYA), HR 725/S 372, introduced by Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) and the late Senator Lautenberg (D-NJ), currently has the support of 58 cosponsors in the House and six cosponsors in the Senate. The bill builds upon existing federal programs by setting forth a policy vision for comprehensive sex education funded by the federal government, providing young people with the information and skills they need to make informed, responsible, and healthy decisions in order to become sexually healthy adults and have healthy relationships. The legislation outlines federal funding requirements for new initiatives for adolescents and young people in institutions of higher education; would establish a pre- and in-service teacher training program for K-12 sex educators; and would amend current federal laws to enable LGBT inclusive education and allow contraceptive distribution in schools.

The *Repealing Ineffective and Incomplete Abstinence-Only Program Funding Act* (Peal Bill), HR 3774, also introduced by Representative Barbara Lee, is currently cosponsored by 24 Representatives. The legislation would eliminate Title V Section 510 of the Social Security Act, ending the statutory AOUM program, the funds from which would be reprogrammed into PREP.

- Support the sexual health of young people by cosponsoring REHYA and the Repeal bill to help equip young people with the information and skills they need to lead healthy lives.

---

3. Ibid.