

Date of Hearing: February 11, 2008

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. No. 2775, Relating to Education

Purpose: Mandates a sex education curriculum that includes the concepts of abstinence, contraception, and sexually-transmitted disease prevention, and is required for graduation from public secondary schools in Hawaii.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) believes this Bill is not necessary at this time. The Department currently includes abstinence-based (including contraceptive methods) sex education as part of the one semester health education class high school students are required to complete for graduation. The Hawaii Content and Performance Standards for Health Education provide a rigor of study that is developmentally appropriate in the study of healthy sexuality. The Department follows the existing Board of Education Policy 2110 "ABSTINENCE-BASED EDUCATION POLICY" (approved in 1995) which states: "In order to help students make decisions that promote healthy behaviors, the Department of Education shall instruct students that abstention from sexual intercourse is the surest and most responsible way to prevent unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases such

as HIV/AIDS, and consequent emotional distress. The abstinence-based education program shall:

- a. support abstinence from sexual intercourse and provide skill development to continue abstinence;
- b. help youth who have had sexual intercourse to abstain from further sexual intercourse until an appropriate time; and
- c. provide youth with information on and skill development in the use of protective devices and methods for the purpose of preventing sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy.”

Because of these current efforts by the Board of Education and the Department, we believe, at this time, that this Bill is not necessary.



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A JOINT LEGISLATIVE EFFORT

E-Mail to: Testimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Regarding: Senate Committee on EDU Hearing
Hearing on: February 11, 2007 @ 3:00 p.m.

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Date: February 7, 2008

To: Senate Committee on Education
Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Honorable Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair

From: Kelly M. Rosati, JD
Executive Director, Hawaii Family Forum
Lobbyist, Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii

Re: **Opposition to SB 2775 Relating to Education**

Honorable Chair and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services & Public Housing, I am Kelly Rosati, **representing both the Hawaii Family Forum and the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii.**

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii. The Roman Catholic Church in Hawaii, under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents over 210,000 Catholics in Hawaii.

Our organizations oppose this measure believing it to be an unwise course of action. Section 1 of SB 2775 is inaccurate in its description of the current Board of Education policy regarding sex education. The current policy #2110 is abstinence-based, not abstinence only as is described in SB 2775, Section 1. Under the current BOE policy, many Hawaii students have had the benefit of the highly successful, federally-funded abstinence program offered by Catholic Charities, called Try Wait.

With all the difficulties facing public schools in Hawaii, we believe it would be terrible public policy to legislate additional graduation requirements related to contraceptive and condom education. Please oppose SB 2775.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

From: Daniel Morishige, Program Director II
Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Mary Jane Program (Try Wait! Program)

Date: February 11, 2008

Place: Senate Education Committee
February 11, 2008
Room 225
3 p.m.

Re: **Testimony in opposition to SB 2775**

My name is Daniel Morishige and I am the Program Director of the Mary Jane Program of Catholic Charities Hawai'i. The Mary Jane Program assists women and teens facing unplanned pregnancies and has a community based abstinence education program called "Try Wait!". I oppose SB 2775 because it does not accurately portray the benefits of abstinence education. Furthermore the current DOE education policy of sex education is abstinence plus which includes both abstinence and contraception.

The Try Wait! Program which has been in existence for the past four years is a federally funded abstinence education program. We have presented our abstinence education program to more than 13,000 public and private school students on all six islands. Our teams uses a national abstinence curriculum with locally made videos, interactive activities, and skits to discuss the abstinence option. Students are given examples on how to deal with peer pressure to have sex, how to set boundaries, how the media can affect their views on sexual behavior, teen pregnancy and STDs. In addition, students receive a locally made

music CD with songs that promote the abstinence message. The federal funding prohibits the program from discussing contraception because it would confuse students by sending mixed messages. We do not promote religion and we do not scare students about sex.

Our program has been well received. We are booked for presentations almost a year in advance and have high satisfaction ratings from students, teachers and parents.

The public schools teach contraception through their own programs and presentations made by other agencies. Thus we act in concert with the schools and other agencies to teach students about both abstinence and contraception. We present the abstinence portion and the schools or other agencies teach the contraception portion. We feel this is a win-win situation as the students receive the full message about both abstinence and contraception.

S.B. 2775 would prohibit a curriculum that promotes abstinence that does not also promote contraception. The basis for this requirement is linked to a "study by Columbia and Yale professors who describe abstinence education curriculum as "ineffective". Most experts agree that there has not been sufficient research to indicate conclusively which curriculum can affect sexual behavior in teens to reduce teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

If this bill is implemented then our program will no longer be able to serve the Hawaii public schools because of the requirement to include information on contraception.

I also oppose SB 2775 for the following reasons:

- The Department of Education currently has a policy, (Policy 2110) which requires that both abstinence and contraception be taught in schools. Since both abstinence and contraception are being taught, the current bill is flawed in making this changed;
- For the past four years Try Wait! has been teaching abstinence in the public and private schools and students can receive a comprehensive sex education with abstinence and contraception groups working together;
- This bill would jeopardize federal funding for Try Wait! because this bill would prevent abstinence programs from being presented in the public schools;
- Our program and the state could lose almost \$2 million in federal grant money;
- The federal grant requires Try Wait! to be evaluated, which is now being done through contract with the University of Hawaii School of Social Work. If we lose our federal funding, UH will also lose this grant money;
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of Try Wait! on Hawaii students will not be completed if we lose our federal funding and UH is not able to complete the evaluation;
- Hawaii students will lose a comprehensive abstinence program. If our program is gone who will replace us? This bill makes no provision to carry on this work
- The Catholic principles which our agency is required to follow do not allow us to teach all forms of contraception which would be required by this bill;
- Most experts agree that scientific evaluation on the effectiveness of abstinence education programs has not yet been completed.

In developing Policy 2110, the DOE recognized that "abstention from sexual intercourse is the surest and most responsible way to prevent unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS and consequent emotional distress". Education about the abstinence option is important given the messages students receive through TV, movies, music, magazines and other

sources that promote or glorify sexual activity without any repercussions. Do not end our abstinence education program by passing this bill.

Senate Bill (SB) Number 2775

Title: Board of Education; Department of Education; Sex Education

Good afternoon, Senators. My name is Brennan Ito and I am a junior at J.B. Castle High School. I am testifying on SB No.2775, I strongly support this Bill for the following reasons. "Hawaii now ranks twelfth among the fifty states in the number of teen pregnancies, and tenth in incidence of Chlamydia. This obviously means that we aren't learning enough about sex education, by passing this Bill it will force public schools to provide us students with the information we need before we get into the real world and aren't protected by mommy and daddy. I also strongly support this Bill because "although some schools do offer sex education, the current abstinence-only structure offered in Hawaii schools may not be achieving desired results of unplanned pregnancy and disease prevention. "A study by Columbia and Yale University professors revealed that abstinence-only sex education programs fail to have a statistically significant effect on the transmission rate of sexually-transmitted diseases or the rate of premarital sexual activity." If that is true then what's the point of teaching public school students sexual education... that's right there is no point.

Senate Bill Number 2775
Title: DOE; Sex Education

Good Afternoon, Senators. My name is Marissa Catalano and I am a sophomore at Castle High School. I am testifying on SB No. 2775, Sex Education.

I support this Bill for the following reasons, we are aware by law stated by the DOE that schools must teach an abstinence based sex education policy.

The reason this resolution came up is that we know there is a policy of abstinence based teaching that is supposed to be comprehensive, with the use of protective devices- that's not happening in schools.

This will be a life long teaching that will help us pass knowledge down to other generations to come.