

WOMEN'S CAUCUS

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus 1050 Ala Moana Blvd #D-26, Honolulu, HI 96814 Email: hidemocraticwomenscaucus@yahoo.com

February 11, 2009

To: Rep. Roy Takumi, Chair
Rep. Lyla Berg, Vice Chair and
Members of the House Committee on Education

From: Jeanne Ohta, Chair of Legislative Committee, Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus

Re: HB 330 HD1 Relating to Health
(2:00 p.m. February 11, 2009, Room 309)

Position: STRONG SUPPORT

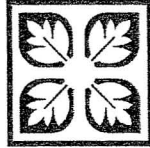
Thank you for allowing me to testify today, in strong support of HB 330 HD1 Relating to Comprehensive Sexuality Health Education.

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawai'i's women and girls. It is in keeping with our mission that we support the provision of comprehensive sexuality health education.

We believe that comprehensive, medically-accurate information about reproductive health is good public policy. It provides age appropriate information on abstinence while also teaching about contraception, disease-prevention methods, and a variety of other topics related to sexuality such as sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, body image, decision-making, and gender roles. The important thing to know about comprehensive sexuality education is that it works. Research shows that teenagers who receive sexuality education that includes discussion of contraception are more likely than those who receive abstinence only messages to delay sexual activity, to use contraceptives when they do become sexually active, and to have fewer partners. (*Kirby, D. (2001) Emerging Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy. Washington, D.C.: national Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 88*)

Major medical, public health and research groups and institutions support more comprehensive forms of sexuality education that includes information about both abstinence and contraception. They include the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Nurses Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologist, the American Public health Association, the National institutes of Health, and the Institute of Medicine.

It is critical for the State of Hawai'i to set the standard for sexuality education that would give teens the information they need and deserve. We urge this committee to pass HB 330 HD1 and thank you for the opportunity to testify.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla Berg Vice-Chair
House Health Committee Members

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice-Chair
House Labor Committee Members

From: Criselda Smith, Program Director 1
Catholic Charities Hawaii
Try Wait! Program

Date: February 11, 2009

Place: House Education/Labor Committee Hearing
February 11, 2009
Room 309
2:00 p.m.

My name is Criselda Smith Program Director for the Try Wait Program of Catholic Charities Hawaii. The Try Wait Program is a federally funded Abstinence Education Program that serves the island of Oahu and most recently the island of Molokai.

I am opposed to House Bill 330 HD1.

There are several key points from this Bill that I would like to correct. There appears to be several misconceptions to what HB 330 HD1 believes Abstinence education programs actually do. Areas of this Bill that could be construed as misleading are the areas that state that contraceptions and or alternative methods of disease prevention are not being discussed, that the Mathamatica study that is referenced can be applied generally to all Abstinence programs and that the purpose for which this Act states is being created will provide students with balanced sex education.



Contraception's and alternative methods happen to be subjects that are discussed in great lengths with students that are enrolled in the Try Wait Program. The Try Wait Program provides interactive activities, opens dialog and invites students to present "myths" that they may not be sure of. I take great pride in saying that each of our presenters are Bachelor degreed young adults that find their roles to be not only facilitators of truth but also a shoulder that many teens lean on for guidance. We discuss the limits of contraception as not to create a cushion for our youth. Our goal is that by stating the limits we can provide a clear picture of what they might be getting themselves into. We want our youth to see that Abstinence is the only 100% way to stay clear of STD's and Teen pregnancy. A statement that even the Center for Disease Control states in their website www.cdc.gov.

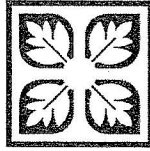
This Bill referenced the Mathematica study which if you haven't read references only 4 of the earliest abstinence programs. A study that cannot be generalized to represent the efficacy of abstinence programs in general. It is important to mention that the Try Wait program is currently conducting its own study which we started in November. We have hired the University Of Hawaii Department Of Social Work to evaluate what impact the Try Wait program is having with students. It is our goal to make sure that if we are going to present something to our youth that we do it in a manner which is responsible and real.

Lastly, this House Bill 330 states that it's purpose is to require any recipient of state funding to provide medically accurate, factual and comprehensive information that is age appropriate and includes education on abstinence and contraception. My question to you would be "what type of balance will this bill require?" As a supporter of Abstinence education I would wish for students to receive a program that would be balanced on both abstinence and contraceptive use. If the belief is that we need to provide all information, do it responsibly. I say this because a local study does show that half of our Hawaii youth are not engaging in sex and therefore they need to be supported too in their decision. The Try Wait Program is valued in our Community. We are presently serving two schools at a time and are booked through April. We have also

been recently invited to the high school on the island of Molokai. The community has been able to provide us with air-fair, lodging and a vehicle, as a way to show that our message is valued too.

As a mother of two adolescents who attend Hawaii High schools, I have vested interest in how and what information is provided when referencing sex education. I am determined to believe in our youth. I believe that when provided the holistic picture of what can occur if our youth choose to engage in sex they can make the right choice. Let's believe in them. Let's continue to provide a true picture addressing every area; emotional consequences, limits of contraception use, boundaries and most importantly self respect.

Thank You



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice-Chair
House Education Committee Members

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice-Chair
House Labor Committee Members

From: Danny Morishige, Program Director II
Catholic Charities Hawaii
Mary Jane Program (Try Wait! Program)

Date: February 11, 2009

Place: Senate Health Committee Hearing
February 11, 2009
Room 309
2:00 p.m.

RE: **Testimony in opposition to HB 330 HD1**

My name is Daniel Morishige and I am the Program Director of the Mary Jane Program of Catholic Charities Hawaii. The Mary Jane Program assists women and teens facing unplanned pregnancies, adoption services, and has a community based abstinence educational program called "Try Wait!". I oppose HB 330 HD1.

I wish to acknowledge and appreciate the amendments made by the House Health Committee to address the issue regarding requiring state funding specifically for sexuality health education to be covered by this bill. These amendments will enable our agency to continue to receive state



Catholic
Charities
USA



200 N. Vineyard Boulevard, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-3938 • Phone (808) 536-1794 • Fax (808) 599-8761
www.CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org



Aloha United Way

funding for our various programs other than sexuality education and our federal contract for the Try Wait program.

Our Try Wait! Program is a five-year federal CBAE grant and is currently in our third year. We also had received and completed a three years SPRANS grant. During that time we have presented our abstinence education program to more than 10,000 public and private school students on all six islands. To date we have made presentations to over 20,000 students. Our teams use a nationally used abstinence curriculum with locally made videos (instead of the videos that came with the curriculum), 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 the students receive a locally made music CD with songs that promote the abstinence message. Our federal funding prohibits our program from promoting 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 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.

The main reason for the opposition to H.B. 330 is that there is growing scientific evidence that abstinence programs are effective in preventing sexual activities and so the statement that abstinence programs have failed or are not effective is premature. For example Catholic Charities Hawaii is in the process of conducting an evaluation on the impact of the Try Wait Program. The University of Hawai'i School of Social Work is conducting an evaluation of our program. They could contribute to the body of scientific evidence supporting the efficacy of abstinence education.

I oppose HB 330 HD 1 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, this bill is unnecessary;
- For the past five 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;
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of Try Wait! on Hawaii students is still in process;
- Most experts agree that further scientific evaluation on the effectiveness of abstinence education programs has not yet been completed. There are new studies that have come out that have found support for abstinence education programs.

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice-Chair
House Education Committee Members

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice-Chair
House Labor Committee Members

From: Lani Kenfield Classroom Presenter
Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Mary Jane Program (Try Wait Program)

Date: February 11, 2009

Place: House Education and Labor Committee Hearing
February 11, 2009
Room 309
2:00 p.m.

RE: **Testimony in opposition to HB 330 HD1**

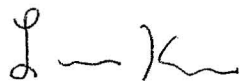
My name is Lani Kenfield; I am currently a classroom presenter for the "Try Wait Program" of Catholic Charities Hawai'i. Our program is an abstinence education program. I have been with the program for almost three years. We have been able to go to private and public schools to provide teens with knowledge and information about the benefits of being abstinent. We understand that teens have options so we present it as such one option for them if they so choose. Our program teaches students not just about abstinence, but also about the emotional consequences, STD's, teen pregnancy, pressures teens face, how to set boundaries, how to say no they are choosing to do so. We are loved and appreciated by many kids and schools' across the islands. This program is making a difference kid's lives allowing them to choose the option that might be best for them. The "Try Wait" program provides a positive option for teens in choosing their sexual lifestyle.

I oppose HB 330 HD 1. Please do not pass this bill, but allow teens to make a choice for themselves on what they deem to be the best option for them in their lives. I believe in this message we teach. I know that it is possible to be abstinent till marriage. I am a 27 year old female who is making this choice, I am choosing to wait till marriage myself, though it's not popular and rare I believe my testimony is strong to the kids that many do not practice abstinence it can be possible to Try Wait till marriage.

Teens are exposed to many different messages they are influences in different ways in our society to make tough choices. Other great programs are able to teach about the contraception use verses that we teach about the limits of contraception. I believe it's important that teens hear other options as well as our program that teaches abstinence. Let's give the teens of Hawai'i an option to make their own choice, allow them to hear all messages from different programs so they are equipped with the knowledge they need to make the best decision for themselves and be proud of it.

I believe in empowering teenagers. I believe that if you equip them knowledge and facts so they can make great choices for themselves and feel a sense of self confidence in the choices they make.

Mahalo and Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lani Kenfield'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and a stylized 'K'.

Lani Kenfield

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice-Chair
House Education Committee Members

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice-Chair
House Labor Committee Members

From: Sean Nishimura, Classroom Presenter
Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Mary Jane Program (Try Wait Program)

Date: February 11, 2009

Place: House Education & Labor Committee Hearing
February 11, 2009
Room 309
2:00 p.m.

RE: **Testimony in opposition to HB 330 HD1**

Aloha and good afternoon, my name is Sean Nishimura. I am currently a Classroom presenter for the Try Wait Program. Before working for the Try Wait Program, I was a counselor for 5 ½ years with the Hawai'i National Guard Youth Challenge Academy. For the year and a half, I have witnessed, first hand, the positive affects of the Try Wait Program. The program teaches youth the benefits of living an abstinent lifestyle before marriage and how personal goals can be reached with this option. Emotional Consequences and contraceptive use are also covered by the program. I have seen how the Program impacts students and gives them personal power to make positive choices in Their lives. The cadets of the Youth Challenge Academy have been very receptive to the Try Wait Program. I have seen many cadets go on to some sort of higher learning, enlist in the military, or enter the work force and believe that the program plays an integral part in assisting students in fulfilling their future goals.

Therefore, I am against HB 330 HD1

Thank you,


Sean Nishimura

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice-Chair
House Education Committee Members

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice-Chair
House Labor Committee Members

From: Christopher Hadden, Classroom Presenter
Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Mary Jane Program (Try Wait Program)

Date: February 11, 2009

Place: House Education & Labor Committee Hearing
February 11, 2009
Room 309
2:00 p.m.

RE: **Testimony in opposition to HB 330 HD1**

My name is Christopher Hadden and I am a classroom presenter for the Try Wait program. I am opposed to HB 330 HD 1

In a recent news article, it has been reported that abstinence only education is ineffective. However, I question the validity of this report. There are many factors to take into consideration when concluding a program such as abstinence only education is in fact ineffective. Is this a general study or did it target a certain groups (i.e. inner city youth)? What types of pressures are the adolescents facing? Media? Peer pressure? Family influence?

In a society where we, as people, try to find simple solutions to a critical problem is like trying to put a band aide on a mortal wound. Telling youth students that it's okay just to use a condom and not stressing the emotional consequences (e.g. depression, guilt, fear, lose of self respect) resulting from sexual activities is setting our adolescents up for failure. Condom use does not protect young adolescents from being emotional scarred if the relationship does not last.

According to an article written by Dr. Stan Weed, it is stated that, "after 20-plus years of comprehensive sex education in the U.S., adolescent rates of consistent condom use are not high enough to eliminate the STD's for which condom are most preventive, such as HIV, let alone STD's for which condom are least preventive. Adolescents contract one fourth of all new HIV infections."

It's interesting to point out how a recent news article indicated that chlamydia is on the rise in our nation but no one is pointing a finger to any comprehensive sex education group. If chlamydia is on the rise, does not that mean comprehensive

sex education groups are failing? No, but it does indicate that we are a nation need to address this issue.

While reviewing HB 330, I noticed that not only is this bill flawed but it is also detrimental towards the Try Wait program and to our kids as well. The bill states that as of September 2008, twenty-five states have refused to participate in abstinence only programs. What it failed to mention is that there are still twenty five other states that endorse abstinence education. Why is it bad to present both perspective of sex education? Is the fear of presenting both comprehensive and abstinence education as separate programs but within the public and private schools could be misleading to our adolescents? If that's the case, then we as parents need to get involved with our kids' lives. We as a society need to act now.

It is disheartening and disturbing that the department that provide our children with education is trying to shun the Try Wait program and withhold abstinence education from our students. Studies show that an abstinence curriculum that was taught in addition to an existing comprehensive sex education decreased sexual initiation by approximately 40% after 20 months for program students versus comparison students in a high-risk population.

The bill also requires any sex education programs to teach both abstinence and contraception. However, what the bill fails to define is to what extent should the organizations teach contraception. Try Wait program do in fact teach about contraception, but not to extent or perspective that our sister agencies desire. Our program talks about the limits of alternate contraceptive in hopes that they too will understand that abstinence is the only 100% way to prevent pregnancy and STD's. As an abstinence education program, our funding does not allow us to teach how to use every contraceptive.

To what extent does comprehensive sex education talk about abstinence? Is that defined in the bill? Since the bill does not clearly define to the extent that abstinence and contraceptive should be taught, I believe it is important that there be separate programs to teach abstinence and contraception. These programs can serve as a check and balance as opposed to a "one shoe fits all" program, especially since not every parent or constituents in your community is comfortable about teaching middle school students how to use a condom. I recently had a concerned parent from Moanalua Middle School as me if we were teaching her son how to use a condom. She clearly stated she did not want her son to learn this skill.

When considering the outcome of this bill, it is not important to please any group that are represented here today or which program is the best but, consider what is important for our kids. Abstinence education is not about pledges, religious and moral beliefs, or politics. It is about giving students the knowledge and tools to make the right choices during difficult situations. It's about life skills. More

importantly, it is the time for all types of sex education groups to stop fighting and work together to complement each other on the topic of sex. By giving different perspectives of sex education, students will receive an overall education about sex and be able to make right choices. If this bill is approved, then the kids will be the one who will suffering today. Think about it. Thank you for your time and consideration.

With care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CH', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Christopher Hadden

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice-Chair
House Education Committee Members

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice-Chair
House Labor Committee Members

From: Chelsie Omo, Classroom Presenter
Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Mary Jane Program (Try Wait Program)

Date: February 11, 2009

Place: House Education & Labor Committee Hearing
February 11, 2009
Room 309
2:00 p.m.

RE: **Testimony in opposition to HB 330 HD1**

My name is Chelsie Omo and I am a classroom presenter for the Try Wait program.

I have been a classroom presenter for 3 years going on 4. I oppose HB 330 HD

The Try Wait program has serviced 20,000 students from the grades 7th -12th

Over the entire state of Hawai'i with the message that abstinence until marriage is one of

The options to avoid such things as teen pregnancy, STD's (according to CDC) and

Emotional consequences. Our program included scientific facts about Sexually Transmitted

Diseases that were found through the Center for Disease Control, condom use rates,

boundaries, pressures that a teenager may face, ways to say NO and how to be assertive.

We have just begun our high school curriculum that discusses the same topics but, with

New, age appropriate activities. Not only are we educators but we are also; positive role

models to the students that abstinence until marriage is the best path for a teenager to take.

We have built many special relationships with both students and teachers. We have

Received numerous letters from students stating that we have changed their ideas about sex,

some of them state that they have never heard the message about abstinence, and they now

want to choose abstinence for their lives. We have also, helped students with their own

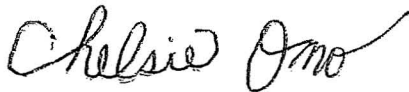
personal concerns about STD's and relationship issues.

We understand that the DOE requires that students be taught both contraception's and abstinence, thus most teachers that have use come to their schools and also, use other programs that cover the topic of contraception. It works great for the students because they have an opportunity to see new faces and new styles of presenting and not have to sit through one program the entire time.

We are also, in the midst of evaluating our program through the University of Hawai'i, if you decide to pass this bill the University Of Hawai'i School Of Social work will not be able to complete their comprehensive study.

I feel that the Try Wait program is an asset to the State of Hawai'i and I think that students deserve the opportunity to choose abstinence. If you pass this bill there will be no other program that will continue this message. Please don't pass this bill, I believe that it will be a detriment to our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chelsie Omo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chelsie Omo

To: Representative Roy Takumi, Chair
Representative Lyla Berg, Vice-Chair
House Education Committee Members

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, Vice-Chair
House Labor Committee Members

From: Deborah Kato, Classroom Presenter
Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Mary Jane Program (Try Wait Program)

Date: February 11, 2009

Place: House Education & Labor Committee Hearing
February 11, 2009
Room 309
2:00 p.m.

RE: **Testimony in opposition to HB 330 HD1**

My name is Deborah Kato; I am currently a classroom presenter for the "Try Wait Program". Not only do I believe in the importance of this message, I also believe in our youth and their capability to make good and responsible decisions for their own well being and future. Our message is abstinence. However, we educate, share and encourage our students on many other adolescent issues, topics and concerns; issues and concerns that I believe are extremely detrimental at this age, and desired to be approached and discussed from our students themselves. We discuss issues on peer pressure, self-worth and respect, alcohol and how to stand up for yourself and be assertive, emotional consequences and much more. I have been with the "Try Wait" program for the past year and a half and have witnessed first-hand the impact that our team has on our students overall sense of self and emotional development. I believe that educating our youth with information, statistical and facts helps not only to empower them but, also encourage them if abstinence is the choice that they are choosing to make. We do not by any means tell them that this is the only option to choose. Nor do we claim that by choosing abstinence your are **guaranteed** physical and / or psychological harm. We merely provide abstinence as an option for them to choose if they decide to.

This message of abstinence is not only a professional matter to me but, holds personal weight and significance in my life. I have learned first hand about the consequences that having sex can have on an individual because not only was I sexually active as a teen, I also, became pregnant at the age of 19. I now have an 8 year old son and am proud to say that I have broken the typical stereotype of a teen parent through my struggles, lowest points and triumphs. I have overcome a lot over the past nine years of my life and the truth is that raising my son as a single mom wasn't and hasn't been the hardest thing for me to face and deal with. The permanent and emotional scarring that occurred since my first intimate relationship when I was a teen still haunts me and so vividly remains.

Dealing with these emotional wounds has by far been one of my deepest, most vulnerable ordeals to try and overcome, and that has never gone away till this day. I strongly believe in this message of abstinence and I oppose HB 330 HD 1. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Deborah Kato". The signature is fluid and connected, with a prominent initial "D" and a distinct "K" at the end.

Deborah Kato