

LATE TESTIMONY

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

From: Chelsie Omo, Classroom Presenter  
Catholic Charities Hawaii  
Try Wait Program

Date: March 18, 2009,

Place: House Education Committee Hearing  
March 20, 2009  
Room 309  
2:00 p.m.

E: **Testimony in opposition to SB 777 HD1**

My name is Chelsie Omo and I am a classroom presenter for the Try Wait program I oppose SB 777 HD1. I have been a classroom presenter for 3 years going on 4 and have seen the positive impact that our program has made state wide I find it very disheartening that there is so much controversy over the topic of asking our children of this state to consider the choice of waiting to have sex till marriage. Never do we create an atmosphere of shame or guilt towards anyone that has engaged in sexual intercourse, never do we state medically inaccurate facts, and never do we exclude any sexual orientation. We have a passion to empower and connect with our students and to show them the positive sides of choosing abstinence.

The Try Wait program has serviced 20,000 students from the grades of 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> over the entire state of Hawaii with the message that abstinence until marriage is one of the options to avoid such things as teen pregnancy, STD's (according to the CDC) and emotional consequences. Our program includes 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 new High School curriculum that discuss 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 idea 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 recently were at Moanalua Middle school where a young girl came to me and gave me a letter in it it states, "on the pretest that was given I checked off that I would have sex when I was 18 and out of high school, but now you have changed my mind. I am not going to have sex till I'm married! You really made me think, thank you so so so much! I appreciate you changing my mind. Thank you for teaching us and thank you for teaching me!" 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 and abstinence, thus most teachers that have us come to their schools also use other programs that cover the topic of contraception. It works great for the students because they have the 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 Hawaii; if you decide to pass this bill the University Of Hawaii 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 Hawaii and I think that students deserve the opportunity to choose abstinence. I oppose bill SB 777 SD 1 and would deeply appreciate an amendment be placed stating “The purpose of this Act is to require any recipient of state funding specifically for sexuality health education programs to provide medically accurate, factual, and comprehensive information that is age appropriate and includes education on abstinence and contraception”. I am not sure if any of you have children, but I do and I cannot imagine him sitting through a class emphasizing learning how to put a condom on a wooden penis or which birth control methods would work best for him and his girlfriend and not having a class that spends quality time teaching them the benefits of waiting to have sex till marriage. I want the very best option for my son and I would hope that you would want the same.

Sincerely,

Chelsie Omo



**A JOINT LEGISLATIVE EFFORT**

E-Mail to: [EDNTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:EDNTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov)  
Regarding: House Committee on EDN  
Hearing on: March 20, 2009 @ 2:00 p.m.  
Copies Necessary: 30 copies

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**Date:** March 20, 2009

**To:** House EDUCATION Committee  
Rep. Roy Takumi, Chair  
Rep. Lyla Berg, PhD, Vice Chair

**From:** Dennis Arakaki  
Interim Executive Director  
Hawaii Family Forum / Hawaii Catholic Conference

**Re:** Opposition with comment on SB 777 Relating to  
Comprehensive Sexuality Health Education

Honorable Chair and members of the House Committee on Education, I am Dennis Arakaki, 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 220,000 Catholics in Hawaii.

We opposed SB 777 as it came from the Senate because it "requires any recipient of state funding to provide medically accurate sexuality education." This requirement would prevent the continued operation of Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) successful federally funded abstinence program, called 'Try Wait.' 'Try Wait' is a medically accurate, abstinence-only program funded through a federal community based grant.

**SB 777 is Unnecessary – State Board of Education Policy #2110 Applies**

SB 777 is an unnecessarily punitive measure, which will de-fund successful local abstinence programs for Hawaii's youth. The Board of Education has an existing policy (**#2110 - see page three attached**) which requires that students be taught:



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Opposition to SB 777 Relating to Comprehensive Sexuality Health Education

“ . . .abstinence 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 policy goes on to require that youth are provided “with information on and skill development in the use of protective devices and methods for the purpose of preventing sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy.”

**The policy already requires both abstinence and contraception be taught to students. It just does not require both be taught at the exact same time. Requiring that both be taught at the same time in the same presentation (as SB 777 would effectively require) undermines the abstinence message, sending the signal that adults don't believe students are capable of abstinence.**

**SB 777 (without HD1) is Unwise Budget Policy and Social Policy**

Section 2 HRS 321 (a) would force organizations, like Catholic Charities Hawaii, with successful federally funded abstinence only programs, to choose between the loss of those federal funds or the loss of their non sex education state funding. We support the amendments made in SB 777, SD1 HD 1 which would prevent the loss of funding and employment of people hired by Catholic Charities to conduct abstinence only programs.

If you feel it is necessary to pass SB 777, we ask that you leave the changes made by the Health Committee intact. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo a nui loa kakou...