

February 19, 2018

Dear House Committee on Human Services and Housing,

I am an Adolescent Health specialist in Portland, OR and I am writing in regard to SB 1540.

Adolescence is a crucial time in a person's life- psychosocially, emotionally and cognitively. As a physician who works with adolescents and young adults, my duty and primary goal is to educate and support this unique population so that they may develop into healthy and responsible adults. Open and honest communication along with nonjudgmental attitudes are crucial in creating trustworthy relationships with teenagers. Thus, facilitating discussions regarding sexual health and the opportunity to provide preventive education.

My main concern with mandatory reporting of consensual activity among youth 12 years of age and older (with other youth who are within 3 years of age) is the increased likelihood that it will deter teens from sharing such important information with an adult, who could otherwise serve as a source of support. Although sexual activity among 12 and 13 year olds is atypical of adolescent behavior, the opportunity to intervene and educate on safe and responsible sexual health behaviors is unlikely to occur since adolescents may no longer feel comfortable sharing this information for fear of being reported. Potential downstream effects on discouraging youth from disclosing sexual health information to adults could lead to increased sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy.

Again, as an Adolescent Health specialist, I am concerned that such a policy will cause more harm to those that it intends to protect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica C. Serrano', written in a cursive style.

Jessica C. Serrano, MD, MPH