
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

February 3, 2020

Chair Keny-Guyer and Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing:

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon respectfully requests the committee's support of House Bill 4112 because Oregon educators need resources, curricula, and training to provide the comprehensive sex education, child abuse prevention, and healthy relationships training that Oregon law mandates, and Oregon students deserve.

While Oregon is a leader in its comprehensive sex education laws and standards, our statutes include no repercussions for noncompliance, and there is no budget attached to the bill, which means there is no funding allocated for supporting districts in implementation, or monitoring implementation, except for the .5 FTE that the Department of Education allocates to issues related to sex education in Oregon. An unknown number of school districts throughout the state do not fully implement the law, either by omitting sex education entirely from their curriculum, by implementing curricula that are not considered comprehensive, or by passing policies that make it challenging for sex educators to do their jobs. The Oregon Health Authority recently surveyed school districts regarding their sex education policies and curricula. Only 35 school districts reported having the required plan of instruction, while 162 districts either did not reply or did not have a plan of instruction.¹ Across all the districts that replied to the survey, the top barrier to being in compliance with the law was a lack of adequate funding. The other top two barriers that districts identified were lack of curriculum guidance and lack of training.² All three barriers are related to a lack of adequate funding and resources that we must begin to address.

Access to information, resources, and quality health care is a fundamental right and shouldn't depend on who we are or where we live. All young people deserve to have the information they need to make safe and healthy choices. Comprehensive sex education is widely supported by a majority of Americans, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Studies show that comprehensive sex education programs not only improve health outcomes, they additionally help prevent child abuse, sexual violence, and gender-based discrimination. Comprehensive sex education and healthy relationship training improves socio-emotional well-being by teaching skills related to building safe and positive relationships, understanding and accepting difference, challenging bias, resolving conflict, making healthy decisions, and defining and promoting enthusiastic consent practices that empower youth to claim their right to bodily autonomy.³

HB 4112 takes the first step in expanding agency capacity for supporting school districts in implementing comprehensive sex education, Erin's Law, and healthy relationship training programs in compliance with the law. Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon urges the committee to vote yes on HB 4112 because youth deserve to have the knowledge and skills they need to build healthy futures with safe relationships.

Sincerely,
Emily McLain
Executive Director
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Oregon

¹ <https://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=4bf3974813d4436793660897cb923311>

² <https://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=4bf3974813d4436793660897cb923311>

³ <https://siecus.org/sex-ed-is-a-vehicle-for-social-change/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=cc47263d-030b-4433-bd66-fd1e3fd26f45>