

DEFEAT SB 185—"Statewide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program" Linda M. Lopez, Sponsor

It is vital to reduce teen pregnancy in New Mexico, BUT this bill, which only promotes contraceptive/condom education, is not the way to approach this important issue.

Comprehensive Sex Education (Condoms/Contraception) Will Be the Only Approach The NM Dept. of Health (DOH) will receive and administer these funds and will probably contract primarily with the NM Teen Pregnancy Coalition (NMTPC). Both promote the condom/contraceptive approach to sexuality education, and this is the only focus of DOH Family Planning educational programs. "A mere 4.7% of comprehensive sex. ed content focuses on abstinence at all" (Heritage Foundation Study, 2004). This contradicts the wishes of the majority of NM parents (72%) who prefer that their children receive character-based abstinence education (NM Zogby Parental Opinion Poll 2003).

Misuse of Funds Shows Health Dept. Irresponsibility DOH used all of its federal abstinence education funding last year to promote a condom/contraceptive curricula that violates federal standards for the use of this money and gave almost half (over \$200,000) to one contractor (NMTPC), violating NM law requiring competitive proposals. DOH has refused to reapply for federal abstinence education funding for 2008. In 2006, DOH lost an entire year's worth of funding, \$500,000 in federal Title V abstinence education dollars, because of non-compliance with federal requirements. DOH cannot be trusted with the administration of additional sexuality education dollars.

DOH Family Planning Programs Have Failed to Reduce Teen Birth or STD Rates These programs use only the condom/contraceptive approach. Evaluation results (February 2006) of 6 NM programs show the following:

- Programs did not reduce the number of teens who had ever had sex (in fact, there was a slight increase).
- Program students showed a 38% increase (from pre-survey to post-survey) for those ever having oral sex—larger than the percentage increase for the control group (25%).
- Program students increased the number of sexual partners they had.
- The number of program students who had ever been pregnant or caused a pregnancy increased from pre-survey to post-survey (over about a 3 month period).

DOH Condom/Contraceptive Programs Are Not Cost Effective DOH spent about \$300,000 for condom/contraceptive programs in 2005 and received \$500,000 in federal funds for Title V abstinence education. Even though the total amount for condom-based programs was less than the total cost for abstinence programs, the average per student cost of condom-based programs (\$400/student) was almost 9 times greater than the \$45/student cost of abstinence programs for the same time period. Abstinence programs are cost-effective in persuading students to refrain from sexual activity, while more expensive condom-based programs have failed to reduce teen birth and STD rates.

Some School Districts Will Not Qualify For Funding On its current website DOH recommends only curricula that promote the condom/contraceptive approach. Any school district wishing to promote abstinence and seeking to access sexuality education funds through DOH will be disqualified. State funds for sexuality education should be available to all districts including those that want to teach abstinence exclusively.

Abstinence Education Programs Will Be Unable to Access Funds NM abstinence education programs showing good results will not qualify to use funds that should be available to all.

- According to their own 2004 DOH program evaluation of an exclusively abstinence program in Roswell (*Reach for the Stars*), program students reduced sexual activity by over 10%.
- The DOH Challenge 2005 had a goal of reducing teen birth rates. Final results revealed that 2 of 6 counties exceeding the goal were using abstinence education programs exclusively (Socorro, Chaves).

DOH Required Curricula Use Inappropriate Material for NM Students See the resource entitled "Bill Promotes Inappropriate Curricula," for direct quotes from curricula and websites.