

~~Andrew Carlson~~  
State Representative



# Minnesota House of Representatives

September 20, 2019

~~Marlene Stoick~~  
~~2303 Village Ter~~  
~~Bloomington, MN 55431~~

Dear ~~Marlene~~:

Thank you very much for contacting me. I appreciated hearing from you on an issue that was before the Legislature this year.

When you called, you asked about my votes with regard to provisions in the House E-12 education omnibus bill (HF 2400) - specifically, the section of the bill directing school districts to implement sexual health education programs for students starting in the 2021-2022 school year. I supported this proposal, and appreciate the opportunity to provide some information.

First, contrary to some misinformation that has been circulated, I should note that there are no instructional materials and no curriculum specified in the bill. Instead of laying out a curriculum, the bill directed the state Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health and other qualified experts, to identify one or more model comprehensive sexual health education programs to which school districts and charter schools would be given access. The legislation respected the local control of school districts and charter schools by allowing those not interested in adopting one of the identified model programs to develop their own curriculums, and certify for themselves that they meet the proposed requirements.

Under the House bill, school sexual health programs would be required to "respect community values and encourage students to communicate with parents or guardians; faith, health, and social services professionals; and other trusted adults about sexuality and intimate relationships." The bill also required that the instruction provided be "age and developmentally appropriate," and that abstinence be included as part of the program.

The bill also respected parental authority by reiterating the ability of parents to opt their child out of any instruction to which they are opposed. In addition, on the House floor an amendment was approved (with my support) requiring school districts to give parents access to materials used to provide sexual health instruction, inform parents of their curriculum review rights, and allow parents to opt the student out of the curriculum with no penalty.



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There is research demonstrating that sexual health education in schools delays sexual activity, prevents the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and reduces the number of unwanted pregnancies. As a legislator and parent, the bottom line for me is that all Minnesota children deserve to be safe and healthy. The legislation aimed to give participating students information and tools to make smart decisions and keep themselves healthy.

In closing, thank you again for contacting me. I appreciated hearing from you, and hope you'll keep in touch with me on any issues of interest and concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Andrew Carlson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is partially obscured by a thick, dark horizontal scribble.

~~Andrew Carlson~~  
State Representative