



May 16, 2019

CONTACT: Paloma Zuleta
pzuleta@powertodecide.org
(202) 812-4477

INTRODUCED DURING SEX ED FOR ALL MONTH, EDUCATION LEGISLATION WILL EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE WITH INFORMATION AND ACCESS

National Organizations Hail Legislation for Young People to Make Healthy Decisions

(Washington, D.C.) – Earlier this week, the U.S. House of Representatives introduced the Real Education for Healthy Youth Act (REHYA) and the Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act (YASHS). These bills will help ensure that all young people have high-quality, culturally competent sexual health information and access to the care they need to make healthy decisions for themselves.

The introduction of the legislation coincides with this month's launch of *Sex Ed For All Month: Accessing Power, Information and Rights*. This national effort works to ensure all young people have the power and right to access the sex education and health care they need to achieve the best positive outcomes for themselves. The effort replaces Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month and was created by organizations dedicated to improving sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice for all. The national organizations include Advocates for Youth, Healthy Teen Network, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Power to Decide and Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

The legislation introduced this week will complement the work underway for *Sex Ed for All Month* by establishing consistent national standards for high-quality, culturally competent sexual health education, and help to provide the agency and support young people need to achieve positive outcomes for themselves.

Debra Hauser, President, Advocates for Youth

In this time when the Trump Administration and extremists around the country are trying to roll back our reproductive and sexual health and rights, these bills are especially important to young people. Youth have the right to lead healthy lives, and that means sex education that teaches young people about consent and helps them distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships. They need sex education and services that help them prevent unintended pregnancy, STIs and HIV. The Real Education for Healthy Youth Act and the Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act are great steps toward ensuring sexual health for all young people.



Janet Max, MPH, CHES, Acting President and CEO, Healthy Teen Network

All young people have a right to sex education and sexual and reproductive health care. We applaud the introduction of this legislation at a time when we face an onslaught of ideologically-driven attacks on proven effective, medically accurate, age-appropriate, sexual health education and services. We have a responsibility to support and empower all young people with the information and tools not only to keep them safe, but to thrive.

Dr. Leana Wen, President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

The science is clear: countless studies have shown that sex education reduces the rate of unintended pregnancies, reduces the rate of STIs, and empowers people to make the best decisions for themselves. Less than 40% of high schools and only 14% of middle schools across the U.S. meet the CDC guidelines for sex education. Yet, the Trump-Pence administration has cut funding and redefined sex education to be abstinence-only. We at Planned Parenthood are proud to work alongside partners and champions in Congress to support the Real Education for Healthy Youth Act and Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act. We know the importance of sex education for all and will fight every attempt to dismantle access to evidence-based sex education because we know that current and future generations deserve to lead lives of choice, and not chance.

Ginny Ehrlich, D.Ed, MPH, MS, CEO, Power to Decide

All young people – no matter who they are or where they live - deserve access to quality sex education and reproductive health services so that they can decide and act upon what is right for them. The introduction of these key pieces of legislation is an important step forward in ensuring that all young people have the power to decide their futures.

Christine Soyong Harley, President & CEO, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)

There has never been a more crucial time to focus on advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights for young people in this country. With the Real Education for Healthy Youth Act and the Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act, we have a real opportunity to give young people everywhere the information, education, and services they need to ensure their lifelong sexual and reproductive health and well-being.