

COMPREHENSIVE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION TALKING POINTS

- *Rep. Hemingway's bill provides parents a choice of three tracks for reproductive health education for their kids.* Parents CHOOSE the track in which their child will be enrolled. **Two tracks teach that abstinence is the only 100% effective means of preventing pregnancy and STDs**, but the comprehensive option includes medically accurate information about contraception, avoiding pregnancy and STDs, and preventing sexual assault through the teaching of healthy relationship skills. Parents can also choose to not enroll their child in either track.
- *Rep. Hemingway is trying to address serious health issues that our teens are dealing with in Utah. This bill offers one more tool that parents, educators, and health care professionals can use to address Utah's rising teen pregnancy and STD rates. Chlamydia is the #1 communicable disease in Utah and 12 teenage girls a day get pregnant. Parents deserve to have a choice* in their children's reproductive health education.
- Studies show that teens who receive comprehensive reproductive health information have lower rates of teenage pregnancy and STD's than those receiving abstinence-only education. **Comprehensive reproductive health education does NOT increase rates of sexual activity**; rather, it helps delay initial onset of sexual activity and increases rates of protection among those who are already sexually active.
- *Rep. Hemingway's bill addresses the fear that teachers experience because of current law.* While the current law allows for comprehensive information to be given, local school districts across the state have widely varying health curricula and kids are receiving very different information based on where they live. Teachers are afraid of serious penalties if they run afoul of strict local guidelines that often restrict them from answering kids' questions or using precise, medically accurate language.
- *Will kids be exposed to sexually explicit material?* **NO** The information that will be presented will be age-appropriate and medically accurate. This is not a class that teaches "how to have sex," nor does it encourage sexual activity. We simply want kids, **whose parents approve**, to have access to the information they need to make smart decisions about their health and know the possible consequences of those decisions.
- *Will the two education choices result in two "extremes"?* **NO** The abstinence-only track simply reiterates current law and would still contain some limited discussion of contraception and STDs, while the comprehensive track would cover these subjects more in depth. Because **parents would also have the choice of opting out of any reproductive health education altogether**, the options they have clearly cover the vast majority of possibilities of parents' wishes.
- *Will some kids from the comprehensive class "talk"?* **NO** The truth is that all kids are talking, but mostly in myths in half-truths. Despite even the most vigilant parents' best efforts, every child is hearing things in the hallways and the locker rooms that would surprise most of us. We simply want to provide a resource for those who want it that can combat these untruths and provide accurate information in its place.