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Reply to: Virginia

February 17, 2016

Via Email Only – kmarty@pkwy.k12.mo.us

Superintendent Dr. Keith Marty
455 N. Woods Mill Rd.
Chesterfield, MO 63017

RE: Illegal abortion provider involvement in the “Healthy Relationships and Sexual Health Curriculum Frameworks”

Dear Dr. Marty:

By way of brief introduction, Liberty Counsel is a non-profit litigation, education, and policy organization with an emphasis on constitutional law, with offices in Florida, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Liberty Counsel provides *pro bono* legal representation, with a particular focus on religious liberty and other First Amendment issues. Concerned parents and residents within the Parkway School District (“the District”) have requested Liberty Counsel’s review of the “Healthy Relationships and Sexual Health Curriculum Frameworks” (“Curriculum” or “Curriculum Frameworks”).

I have reviewed the curriculum and must caution the District that if it adopts the Curriculum, it will violate Missouri law due to the involvement of Planned Parenthood and other organizations that provide and promote abortions. In Missouri, abortion services providers and those who provide referrals for abortions are prohibited from “offering, sponsoring, or furnishing” “in any manner” “any course materials or instruction” “relating to human sexuality.”

Missouri Stat. Ann. § 170.015(7) provides that “No school district or charter school, or its personnel or agents, **shall provide abortion services, or permit a person or entity to offer, sponsor, or furnish in any manner any course materials or instruction relating to human sexuality** or sexually transmitted diseases to its students **if such person or entity is a provider of abortion services.**” Under the statute, “**Abortion services**” includes “(a) **Performing**, inducing, or assisting in the performance or inducing of **an abortion which is not necessary to save the life of the mother;**” or “(b) **Encouraging** a patient to have an abortion or **referring** a patient for an abortion, which is not necessary to save the life of the mother.” Mo. Ann. Stat. § 170.015(8)(2)(a) and (b). As described

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below, the involvement of several organizations in the development of the Curriculum Frameworks, renders the Curriculum Frameworks ineligible for adoption by the District.

A brief bit of history is in order at this point: on July 21, 2014, the District introduced the founding document of the [wholesale revision of Parkway's sex education program](#), the so called "[National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K-12](#)" ("Standards"). [Promoted by Planned Parenthood](#), the Standards were created by the "[Future of Sex Education \(FoSE\) Initiative](#)" "a partnership between [Advocates for Youth, Answer](#) and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. ([SIECUS](#))." The FoSE Initiative by means of its "Standards" seeks to change "the future of sex education and to **promote the institutionalization of comprehensive sexuality education in public schools.**" (Emphasis and hyperlinks added).

In addition to helping draft the "Standards" and key portions of the Curriculum, "Advocates for Youth" is featured prominently throughout the curriculum materials as a "resource," yet it qualifies under Missouri Stat. Ann. § 170.015(8)(2)(b) as a prohibited entity "encouraging" or "referring" minors to obtain abortions. "Advocates" takes the following position on the access of minor girls (or "young women") to "[Abortion](#):"

Young women need the right to safe and legal abortion. But many states **place barriers on young women's access by requiring parental notification or even consent**...United States policies contribute to an anti-choice climate and limit young women's access to abortion.

No young woman, anywhere, should be **forced** to seek out an illegal, dangerous procedure or **carry a pregnancy she didn't want to term**. (Emphasis added).

"Advocates for Youth" doesn't simply promote these disturbing positions, including allowing a pregnant minor girl to get an abortion without her parents' knowledge or consent. It provides referrals on its "[Advocates' Young People and Abortion Research Guide](#)" website to the following abortion providers and advocates:

- [Planned Parenthood](#)
- [National Abortion Federation](#)
- [Abortion Access Project](#)
- [ACLU - Reproductive Rights](#)
- [Choice USA - Leadership for a Pro-Choice Future](#)

"Advocates for Youth" euphemistically refer to any pregnant minor girl as a "young woman," and advocate for abortions "not necessary to save the life of the mother." The participation and inclusion of "Advocates for Youth" renders the Curriculum Frameworks illegal under Mo. Stat. Ann. § 170.015(8)(2)(b).

In addition to helping draft the "Standards," and being referenced repeatedly in the Curriculum Frameworks, SIECUS is an abortion "provider" within the definition of the

statute, whose involvement taints the curriculum material developed, rendering it unlawful for use upon Missouri schoolchildren. It should be noted that 'SIECUS is credited by the Teen Pregnancy Partnership Prevention Project ("TPPP") on page 6 of the [2014 Annual Report](#) for sending the keynote speaker on "**Overcoming Resistance**" to what TPPP claims is "Medically Accurate Sexual Health Education," such as the Curriculum Frameworks.¹ SIECUS states that "adolescents" (minor girls) "regardless of age" should have access to abortion services (or "reproductive healthcare"):

ADOLESCENT SEXUAL HEALTH

SIECUS believes that becoming a sexually healthy adult is a key developmental task of adolescence. Professionals, including educators, healthcare providers, and social service providers, should promote adolescent sexual health by providing accurate information and education about sexuality, and **by assuring access to sexual and reproductive health care**. Society can enhance adolescent sexual health by providing access to **comprehensive sexuality education** and affordable, sensitive, and confidential **reproductive healthcare services**. (Emphasis added).

...

ABORTION

SIECUS believes that **every woman, regardless of age or income, should have the right to obtain an abortion under safe, legal, affordable, easily accessible, confidential, and dignified conditions**. Every woman is entitled to have full knowledge of the options available to her, and to obtain complete and unbiased information and counseling.

SIECUS believes that **abortion counseling** and services should be provided by professionals specially trained in this field. **SIECUS believes that it is unethical for any organization to use anti-abortion propaganda, misinformation, manipulation, or fear and shame tactics to dissuade women facing unintended pregnancy from exercising their right to choose**. (Bold emphasis added; italics original).

The pro-abortion advocacy of SIECUS cannot be disputed. SIECUS "encourages" and "refers" minors to receive abortions, in violation of Mo. Stat. Ann. § 170.015(8)(2)(b).

In addition to "Advocates for Youth" and SIECUS, Missouri's "Teen Pregnancy Prevention Partnership" ("TPPP"), which has provided its "[Audit](#)" "based solely on materials provided by the Parkway District," lists the Curriculum Frameworks as providing numerous pro-abortion resources, in addition to "[Advocates for Youth](#)," including "[I Wanna Know](#)," "[Teensource](#)," and "[SexEtc.](#)" [which has 617 references to abortion on its website](#), most of which are positive, while only 200 for "abstinence," the majority of which are negative. The resource "[Scarleteen](#)" [has 3,680 references to abortion](#), including the article "[She's under 18: How Can She Get An Abortion?](#)"

¹After parental concern and growing outcry, [the District curiously added "Abstinence-based" to its website](#) description, despite the entire proposed Curriculum Frameworks being 'SIECUS, Planned Parenthood, pro-abortion, and pro-homosexuality-based, none of which have anything to do with "abstinence."

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TPPP is also credited on [the District website](#) as an advisor “in the development of the newly proposed sexual health curriculum.” TPPP’s [2014 Annual Report](#) lists one of its “organizational members” as “Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri” (“Planned Parenthood”). TPPP attempts in its September 10, 2015 letter to distance itself from Planned Parenthood, but its letter is unconvincing.

TPPP’s eponymous “Partnership” - at least in regard to Planned Parenthood - means something more than mere agreement or having common goals. “Partners” take action. TPPP claims to have no control over who joins its organization as a “member,” and it claims that its website merely offers Planned Parenthood locations for “low-income” “birth control and STI testing.” This is belied by the fact that TPPP **affirmatively provides** the website link to the national website “PlannedParenthood.org,” **which indeed refers to abortion services, many at clinics owned by Planned Parenthood.** Moreover, all local St. Louis Planned Parenthood locations **listed on TPPP’s website** provide “Abortion Referral” services, stating that “This health center doesn’t provide abortion services — but we can help you. [Call us for a referral list of health care providers in your area that offer abortion services.](#)”

Planned Parenthood has been exposed for offering to sell baby body parts, in [numerous unedited videos obtained in multiple locations across the nation](#). Nonetheless, TPPP promotes on its website “**Resources**” for “**Teens**,” including “emergency contraceptives” and [abortion referral services at Planned Parenthood St. Louis](#). Thus, TPPP, by allowing Planned Parenthood “membership” in its “Partnership,” and by making website referrals to Planned Parenthood, is a party prohibited by 170.015(8)(b) from participating in curriculum development. Planned Parenthood is an abortion “provider” prohibited under § 170.015(7) and (8)(a)-(b).

Finally, Planned Parenthood St. Louis recently stated that “Participants in Planned Parenthood’s Teen Advocates for Sexual Health (TASH) program **launched** the [comprehensive sex education] campaign, and **now the youth leaders and their allies have nearly achieved their goal.**” (Emphasis added). TPPP and Planned Parenthood can hardly at this juncture disclaim “offering,” “sponsoring” or “furnishing in any manner” the pro-abortion sex education materials included in the Curriculum Frameworks. Thus, Planned Parenthood, TPPP, “Advocates for Youth” and SIECUS, should all have been disqualified from involvement in the development of the Parkway Curriculum Frameworks as organizations “encouraging” or “referring” minor patients to obtain abortions.

As if these incestuous corporate relationships between Planned Parenthood and its “partners” were insufficient grounds for the Parkway District to reject the Curriculum Frameworks, [GLSEN has helped formulate the “Standards”](#) the “Frameworks” seeks to enact. The curriculum samples contain more instances than this letter can list of [coded attempts to normalize homosexuality and cross-dressing by teaching false theories about “sexual orientation,” “gender identity,” and “gender expression,”](#) causing kids to question [“what it means to be a boy/man, and what it means to be a girl/woman,”](#) in addition to attacking the traditional family [under the guise of combatting “discrimination” based on “gender roles and stereotypes.”](#) This wholesale promotion of sexual anarchy and abortion

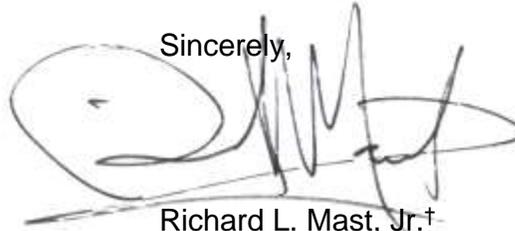
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disguised as “health education” must not be forced into the curriculum, and thereby allowed to destroy childhood innocence.

The Parkway School District should therefore reject the Curriculum Frameworks in their entirety, and retain its current curriculum offerings. If the District nonetheless illegally foists the Curriculum Frameworks on the children of the District, Liberty Counsel is prepared to take additional action to prevent irreparable harm to the rights of our numerous local constituents. Should you have questions about any of the points contained in this letter, please don't hesitate to contact me at 407-875-1776.

Sincerely,



Richard L. Mast, Jr.†

CC

Attachments

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From: Alaina Smith, Grassroots Organizer, Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri [<mailto:alaina.smith@ppslr.org>]

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2016 5:48 PM

To: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Subject: Will you take action for Parkway Students?



Advocates The Political Arm of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri

Dear Samuel,

For 3 years, students in the Parkway school district have been organizing for a more inclusive sex education curriculum: one that takes national standards into account and doesn't rely on abstinence only rhetoric when talking about sex. Participants in Planned Parenthood's Teen Advocates for Sexual Health (TASH) program launched the campaign, and now the youth leaders and their allies have nearly achieved their goal—but they urgently need your help.

[Sign the petition to stand with Parkway students!](#)

A small group of parents opposed to more comprehensive sexuality education - especially lessons inclusive of LGBTQ youth - have become vocal in an attempt to defeat the updates students want and deserve. The Board of Education was originally scheduled to vote on the improved curriculum framework in the fall, but the vote was pushed back to March. **Student leaders are now calling for support:**

Speak up at the next Board of Education Meeting

[Wed, February 17th, 6:30pm](#)

Central Middle School

It is crucial that supportive Parkway residents are heard and represented at this meeting, the last before the Board of Education votes in March. If you are willing to make a statement of support, please send me a quick confirmation. I am also more than happy to answer any questions or help think about your comments.

Statements are capped at about 2 minutes and speakers must sign up at the meeting entry table between [6:30-7pm on the 17th.](#)

OR Submit a statement by [5pm this Monday](#) the 15th.

Email to me at alaina.smith@ppslr.org

In-person statements are strongly encouraged—and students deeply appreciate the support as they may face hostile comments from opposition—but if you are not available [on Wednesday evening](#), we can arrange for someone else to read or hand in your statement for you. To have your statement delivered, please email it to me by [5pm this Monday](#). Please include your full name, a way to contact you, your zipcode or address, and how you are connected to Parkway. Please ensure that it is no more than 2 minutes when read aloud.

Sign the petition to show your support!

Now that the rescheduled vote is approaching, students are calling for more people to [sign the petition](#) originally circulated in the fall. Students will personally deliver printed petitions to the Board of Education. (Dates reflect the old timeline but this is still the right petition!)

Thank you for taking action in support of comprehensive sex education and the students championing their right to an accurate, complete education. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or ideas on the campaign.

In solidarity,

Alaina

Alaina Smith (she, her, hers)
Grassroots Organizer
[314.531.7526 ext. 334](tel:314.531.7526)

PS: Check out these resources to learn more about the proposed curriculum and the evidence behind it:

- [Proposal overview](#) from the Teen Pregnancy & Prevention Partnership (TPPP)
- [Fact Sheet](#) on support for comprehensive sex education (TPPP)
- [Detailed curriculum FAQ](#) from the Parkway Schools' website

Act. No matter what.

visitppadvocates.org

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Speakers

Hotlines

- ✓ Breast and cervical cancer screenings
- ✓ Contraceptive counseling and supplies
- ✓ Testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases
- ✓ HIV testing and risk reduction counseling
- ✓ Pregnancy testing
- ✓ General health screenings for high blood pressure, diabetes and anemia
- ✓ Community education and outreach

[The Contraceptive Choice Center](#) 314. 747.0800, 4533 Clayton Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110, Well woman exams, PAP smears, Sexually transmitted infection testing, treatment, emergency contraception, birth control, LARC methods, same day insertions, female providers available, evening hours, accepts most insurance plans, accepts uninsured patients on a sliding fee scale.

[The SPOT](#) 314.535.0413, 4169 Laclede, between Sarah and Boyle, Mon-Fri between 1:00 – 5:00 pm For anyone 13 to 24, drop in center where you can chill, watch TV, hop on a computer, grab a snack, find a job, see a doctor, get tested for pregnancy or STIs, get birth control, or talk to a counselor – ALL FREE!

[People's Health Centers](#), OB-GYN services, family planning, HIV/AIDS testing and counseling

[Corporate Site](#) 5701 Delmar, St. Louis, MO 63112, 314.367.7848

[West Site](#) 7200 Manchester (between McCausland and Big Bend), Maplewood, MO 63143, 314.781.9162

[North Site](#) 11642 W. Florissant Avenue, Florissant, MO 63033, 314.838.8220

[Saint Louis ConnectCare](#), 5535 Delmar Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63112, 314.361.2273, STD clinic

[Planned Parenthood](#) Sliding fee Scale for birth control and STI testing

[Central West End](#) 4251 Forest Park Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63108, 314.531.7526

[North County](#) 2796-98 North Highway 67, Florissant, MO 63033, 314.921.4445

[South Grand](#) 3401 South Grand, St. Louis, MO 63118, 314.865.1850

[St. Peters](#) 208 Mid Rivers Mall Center Drive, St. Peters, MO 63376, 636.279.3339

[West County](#) #1 Stonegate Center, Manchester, MO 63088, 636.431.0030

Young People and Abortion

 Tags: [abortion](#), [teen pregnancy](#)

News, information, and research about young people and abortion

 Last Updated: Aug 5, 2013 | URL: <http://researchguides.advocatesforyouth.org/abortion> | [Print Guide](#) | [RSS Updates](#)
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Search:

Abortion Research Words

Search terms when researching adolescents and abortion. Click to expand.


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From Advocates for Youth

- Adolescents and Abortion
- Youth and Unsafe Abortion: A Global Snapshot

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Search the web



[Comments \(0\)](#)

Search Google Scholar



[Comments \(0\)](#)

Search PubMed

PubMed is the National Library of Medicine's database of over 20 million citations for biomedical literature.



Search PubMed:

Statistics, Surveillance, and Reports

- Guttmacher - Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States**
 Providing multiple statistics on the women who have abortions, the risks associated with abortions, and the policies made on abortion, this page is both comprehensive and a way of disproving certain myths about abortions.
- Guttmacher - State Facts About Abortion**
 Breaks down 30 years of abortion statistics by state and compares them to national averages.
- Abortion Surveillance - United States, 2009**
 Each year, CDC requests abortion data from the central health agencies of 52 reporting areas (the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City).
- World Health Organization | Unsafe Abortion**
 An estimated 21.6 million unsafe abortions took place worldwide in 2008, almost all in developing countries. These unsafe abortions are carried out by untrained persons under poor hygiene conditions. Deaths due to unsafe abortion remain close to 13% of all maternal deaths.
- The World's Abortion Laws: Home**
 Since 1998, the Center for Reproductive Rights has produced The World's Abortion Laws map to visually compare the legal status of induced abortion in different countries-and to advocate for greater progress in ensuring access to safe and legal abortion services for all women worldwide.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

PubMed Feed: Recent Research on Adolescent Abortion

Citations for recently published journal articles, provided by the National Library of Medicine. Visit PubMed or use the PubMed search box (left) to learn more.

- Comparison of the effects of voluntary termination of pregnancy and uterine evacuation for medical reasons on female sexual function.
- "Choosing Life": Birth Mothers on Abortion and Reproductive Choice.
- Does the type of abortion provider influence contraceptive uptake after abortion? An analysis of longitudinal data from 64 health facilities in Ghana.

[View Website](#)
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[Comments \(0\)](#)

Organizations

Organizations which work on abortion access and rights for young people

- Planned Parenthood
- National Abortion Federation
- Abortion Access Project
- ACLU - Reproductive Rights
- Choice USA - Leadership for a Pro-Choice Future

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Resources for Educators

- Answer Lesson Plans - Abortion
- FLASH Lesson Plan: Uncovering the Facts about Adoption, Abortion and Teen

My Profile


Emily Bridges

Contact Info

 Advocates for Youth
 2000 M Street NW, Suite 750
 Washington, DC 20036
 202 419 3420
[Send Email](#)

Links:

[Website / Blog](#)
[Profile & Guides](#)

Subjects:

Adolescent reproductive and sexual health, sex education, contraceptive access, HIV prevention, teen pregnancy, GLBTQ rights, youth activism

Ask a Question

 Still have questions? Email the librarian:
emily@advocatesforyouth.org
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ABORTION

PUBLICATIONS ON ABORTION

ABORTION POLICY AND ADVOCACY

FEDERAL POLICY

STATE POLICY

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

RELATED TOPICS

CONTRACEPTION

SEX EDUCATION

HELPING YOUTH TO DELAY SEX

SEX EDUCATION RESOURCES FOR ADVOCATES HOME

SEX EDUCATION - MAKING THE CASE

UNDERSTANDING SEX EDUCATION POLICY AND FUNDING

SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

HOW CAN ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH HELP?

TIPS FOR ADVOCATES

NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS

SAMPLE SEX EDUCATION ADVOCACY MATERIALS

FOR SEX EDUCATORS: LESSON PLANS, CURRICULA AND OTHER RESOURCES

NATIONAL SUPPORT CENTER FOR STATE TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION ORGANIZATIONS

Abortion

Print Version

Young women need the right to safe and legal abortion. But many states place barriers on young women's access by requiring parental notification or even consent. Studies have shown that when barriers like these exist, young people wait longer to have an abortion – increasing the possibility of the procedure's being illegal in their state, and meaning they now need a riskier procedure to end the pregnancy.

Women in low income countries also need access to safe and legal abortions. Complications from pregnancy are the leading cause of death for young women ages 15-19 in low income countries. Each year at least 2 million women undergo unsafe abortions and tens of thousands die from them. United States policies contribute to an anti-choice climate and limit young women's access to abortion.

No young woman, anywhere, should be forced to seek out an illegal, dangerous procedure or carry a pregnancy she didn't want to term.

If you are conducting research on adolescents and abortion, be sure to check out [Advocates' Young People and Abortion Research Guide](#) for the most recent news, scholarly research, and publications from a variety of sources.

Join the 1 in 3 Campaign

The 1 in 3 Campaign is a grassroots movement to start a new conversation about abortion—telling our stories, on our own terms. Together, we can end the stigma and shame women are made to feel about abortion. [Watch videos](#), [listen to stories](#), and [share your own story](#).

General Facts

- ▶ Abortion and Young People in the United States
- ▶ Youth and Unsafe Abortion: A Global Snapshot
- ▶ Abortion and Parental Involvement Laws
- ▶ Visit the Guttmacher Institute's State Facts About Abortion to learn more about abortion access in your state.

Parents' Sex Ed Center
PARENTS DON'T HAVE TO GO IT ALONE

Sex Education Resource Center
POLICY ASSISTANCE, LESSON PLANS & RESOURCES

Take Action for Change
TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Youth Activism
ACT. CONNECT. EMPOWER.

DONATE TODAY
SUPPORT ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH

Activist Spotlight

NAME: BRUNISHA

"I want young people now, and future generations, to be informed before making decisions that can alter their lives."



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT BRUNISHA

SIGN UP FOR UPDATES
CLICK HERE TO RECEIVE NEWS AND ALERTS



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Support SIECUS!

Make sexuality education available to all.

Stay informed!

Sign up for SIECUS newsletters, updates, action alerts, and more!

Quick Links

Position Statements

Since its inception, SIECUS has taken stands on major sexuality issues confronting society. SIECUS invites other organizations and individuals to join in affirming these statements and in working for their implementation.

[Human Sexuality](#) / [Sexual Rights](#) / [Sexual Health](#) / [Sexuality Education](#) / [Culture and Society](#)

HUMAN SEXUALITY

Human sexuality encompasses the sexual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors of individuals. Its various dimensions involve the anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry of the sexual response system; identity, orientation, roles, and personality; and thoughts, feelings, and relationships. Sexuality is influenced by ethical, spiritual, cultural, and moral concerns. All persons are sexual, in the broadest sense of the word.

SEXUALITY THROUGHOUT THE LIFESPAN

Sexual feelings, desires, and activities are present throughout the life cycle. SIECUS believes that all people have the right to education about sexuality, sexual health care, and sexual expression appropriate to their age and stage of life. Age-appropriate education and information concerning sexual feelings, attitudes, and behavior should be available to all individuals, their families, healthcare providers, and other caregivers.

SEXUALITY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

SIECUS believes that individuals with physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities have a right to education about sexuality, sexual health care, and opportunities for socializing and sexual expression. Healthcare workers and other caregivers must receive comprehensive sexuality education, as well as training in understanding and supporting sexual development, behavior, and related healthcare for individuals with disabilities. The policies and procedures of social agencies and healthcare delivery systems should ensure that services and benefits are provided to all persons without discrimination because of disability.

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SEXUAL RIGHTS

Sexual rights are human rights, and they are based on the inherent freedom, dignity, and equality of all human beings. Sexual rights include the right to bodily integrity, sexual safety, sexual privacy, sexual pleasure, and sexual healthcare; the right to make free and informed sexual and reproductive choices; and the right to have access to sexual information based on sound scientific evidence.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

SIECUS believes that individuals have the right to live in accordance with their sexual orientation whether they are bisexual, heterosexual, gay, or lesbian. The legal system should guarantee the civil rights and protection of all people, regardless of sexual orientation. Prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation is unethical and immoral.

GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY

SIECUS believes that gender equality and equity are fundamental human rights. Society must recognize how gender-based stereotyping, including prejudice toward transgender, transsexual, and intersex individuals, can result in harmful consequences, such as gender-based violence

and sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. Gender-based stereotyping must be eliminated, and the use of gender-inclusive language promoted. The legal system should guarantee the civil rights and protection of all people, regardless of gender, gender identity, or gender expression.

ROMANTIC AND SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

SIECUS believes that individuals have the right to choose to enter into romantic and sexual relationships as well as the right to choose not to do so. SIECUS believes that all romantic and sexual relationships should be consensual between partners who are developmentally, physically, and emotionally capable of giving this consent. Responsible romantic and sexual relationships should be based on shared personal values, and should be consensual, non-exploitive, honest, pleasurable, and if any type of intercourse occurs, protected against unintended pregnancy and STDs. Because many adolescents are or will be sexually active, they should receive support and assistance in developing the skills to evaluate their readiness for mature romantic and sexual relationships.

MASTURBATION

SIECUS believes that masturbation is a natural, common, and non-harmful means of experiencing sexual pleasure. Masturbation can be a way of becoming comfortable with one's body and enjoying one's sexuality, whether or not in a sexual relationship. Masturbation is a safe alternative to shared sexual behavior. SIECUS believes that no one should be made to feel guilty for choosing or not choosing to masturbate.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

SIECUS believes coerced and exploitative sexual acts and behaviors such as rape, incest, sexual relations between adults and children, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment are always reprehensible. Information and education programs should teach means of preventing such acts, and communities should enforce laws to punish them. Communities should support treatment programs to help survivors and offenders as well as research to increase understanding of the causes and effects of sexual exploitation.

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SEXUAL HEALTH

All people have a right to healthcare services that promote, maintain, and if needed, restore sexual and reproductive health. Healthcare providers should assess sexual and reproductive health needs and concerns as integral parts of each individual's health and wellness care and make appropriate resources available.

ADOLESCENT SEXUAL HEALTH

SIECUS believes that becoming a sexually healthy adult is a key developmental task of adolescence. Professionals, including educators, healthcare providers, and social service providers, should promote adolescent sexual health by providing accurate information and education about sexuality, and by assuring access to sexual and reproductive health care. Society can enhance adolescent sexual health by providing access to comprehensive sexuality education and affordable, sensitive, and confidential reproductive healthcare services.

ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

SIECUS believes that all people, regardless of age or income, should have access to affordable, confidential sexual health services including, but not limited to, access to methods of contraception and disease prevention, testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, and prenatal care.

ABORTION

SIECUS believes that every woman, regardless of age or income, should have the right to obtain

an abortion under safe, legal, affordable, easily accessible, confidential, and dignified conditions. Every woman is entitled to have full knowledge of the options available to her, and to obtain complete and unbiased information and counseling.

SIECUS believes that abortion counseling and services should be provided by professionals specially trained in this field. SIECUS believes that it is unethical for any organization to *use anti-abortion propaganda, misinformation, manipulation, or fear and shame tactics to dissuade women facing unintended pregnancy from exercising their right to choose.*

SIECUS further believes that violence against abortion providers and harassment intended to impede women's access to these providers are unconscionable attempts to undermine women's reproductive rights and should be decisively prosecuted by the justice system.

HIV/AIDS

SIECUS believes that the global HIV/AIDS pandemic needs to remain a top priority for governments, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic entities, corporations, academic institutions, medical professionals, scientists, the media, and societies around the world. Individuals need access to accurate information about HIV/AIDS, as well as evidence-based prevention programs and methods. HIV testing, treatment, and care must be widely accessible and affordable, and only provided with informed consent. All HIV/AIDS testing, treatment, and care and any related reporting requirements should be done in a manner that ensures the privacy and confidentiality of the individual. Governments and private entities must work together to ensure progress in reducing the spread of HIV and improving care and treatment options for those individuals already impacted by the pandemic.

HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS TRAINING

SIECUS believes that all healthcare practitioners should be well trained in the areas of sexuality and sexual and reproductive health. Professional training for all healthcare practitioners, including continuing education programs, should address medical, ethical, legal, and cultural aspects of sexuality. Healthcare practitioners are expected to provide care that is unbiased and meets the medical and psychological needs of each patient.

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SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Sexuality education is a lifelong process that begins at birth. Parents/caregivers, family, peers, partners, schools, religious organizations, and the media influence the messages people receive about sexuality at all stages of life.

All people have the right to accurate information and age- and developmentally appropriate education about sexuality. Sexuality education should address the biological, sociocultural, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of sexuality within the cognitive learning domain (information), the affective learning domain (feelings, values, and attitudes), and the behavioral learning domain (communication, decision-making, and other skills).

SCHOOL-BASED SEXUALITY EDUCATION

SIECUS believes that comprehensive school-based sexuality education that is appropriate to students' age, developmental level, and cultural background is an important part of the school curriculum at every grade. A comprehensive sexuality program will provide medically accurate information, recognize the diversity of values and beliefs represented in the community, and complement and augment the sexuality education children receive from their families, religious and community groups, and healthcare professionals.

TEACHER TRAINING

SIECUS believes that classroom teachers and community educators who teach about sexuality

should be well trained on the principles, content, and best practices for providing sexuality education. Teachers should also have access to updated and current sexuality information, curricula, and materials.

SIECUS further believes that all pre-kindergarten through twelfth-grade teachers should receive sufficient training in human sexuality in order to be able to address potential issues and questions about sexuality.

PARENTS AS SEXUALITY EDUCATORS

SIECUS believes that parents and caregivers are—and ought to be—their children's primary sexuality educators. SIECUS recognizes that a number of factors, including lack of knowledge, skills, or comfort, may impede a parent's or caregiver's successful fulfillment of that role. SIECUS believes that communities, schools, faith-based institutions, the media, and professional sexuality educators should help parents by providing training, resources, understanding, and encouragement.

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CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Sexuality is an intrinsic component of human identity. The variety of cultural beliefs, values, and customs related to sexuality has profound influence on both society and individuals. Cultural beliefs and norms are influenced and expressed through many institutions including families, communities, schools, faith-based organizations, and mass media. These institutions have an obligation to affirm sexuality in ways that support the sexual health and rights of all members of any society.

SEXUALITY AND RELIGION

SIECUS believes that religion can play a significant role in promoting an understanding of sexuality as an intrinsic part of all humans. Faith-based institutions are in a unique position to provide sexuality education. SIECUS further believes that religious and spiritual leaders and organizations have a responsibility to affirm and support the sexual rights of *all* members of their communities.

SEXUALITY AND THE MEDIA

SIECUS believes that the media has a responsibility to present the complexities of human sexuality at all stages of the life cycle in a manner that is medically accurate, sensitive to diversity, and free of exploitation, prejudice, gratuitous sexual violence, and dehumanizing sexual portrayals.

SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIALS

SIECUS believes that sexually explicit visual, printed, or on-line materials can be valuable educational or personal aids when sensitively used in a manner appropriate to the viewer's age and developmental level. Such materials can help reduce ignorance and confusion and contribute to a positive concept of sexuality while supporting the sexual rights of all. However, the use of violence, exploitation, or degradation, or the portrayal of children in sexually explicit materials is reprehensible.

SIECUS believes that adults should have the right to access sexually explicit materials for personal use. Legislative and judicial efforts to prevent the production or distribution of sexually explicit materials endanger constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of speech and press, and could be employed to restrict the appropriate professional use of such materials by sexuality educators, therapists, and researchers.

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