

March 31, 2021

Kat Cammack  
Congresswoman  
Gainesville District Office

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██████████  
Gainesville, FL 32653

Dear Congresswoman Cammack,

The United States is the highest of all “developed” nations in not only teen pregnancy, but also unintended pregnancies, abortions, and STIs ([Talk the New Sex Ed](#)). We have observed that these consequences may be the result of the insufficient sexual education programs offered to our youth. Statistics show that 96% of parents support sex education in high school, so why are students failing to obtain proper information on their sexual health ([Planned Parenthood](#))? As victims of the inadequate sexual education in place, we are demanding a re-examination of such sex ed programs.

Based on recommended standards and general practices, the state of Florida is severely lacking a proper sex education curriculum. In Florida, statutes permit public schools to provide “abstinence-only, abstinence-plus or comprehensive sexual health education instruction” ([Florida Department of Education](#)). Florida is consequently not recognized as a state that mandates medical accuracy or HIV education. The abstinence-only programs that Florida officials have long promoted are based on religious ideologies rather than medically accurate information, distorting the views of an impressionable youth.

It is reported that in 2011-2013 43% adolescent females and 57% of adolescent males received info about birth control before the first time they had sex ([Planned Parenthood](#)). When they do not receive adequate education, young girls often turn to the internet where information could be wrong and even dangerous. These detrimental consequences are easily avoidable. A greater availability of free or subsidized contraceptives has been proven to lead to lower rates of pregnancy and births ([Guttmacher Institute](#)). Furthermore, a greater education can lower STI rates and reduce the risk for unintended pregnancies.

In order to create these changes, there needs to be legislation that requires standardized and medically accurate sexual education, not based on any one religious viewpoint. The appropriate textbooks should be provided to students. There needs to be oversight and enforcement to ensure that students are getting the education they need. There should be periodic standardized testing on students’ knowledge of their sexual health; possibly one in the 8th grade, after a broad overview and general education, and another in a student’s high school career, after a more in-depth education. The curriculum should include education about anatomy, birth control methods and options, STIs, and consent. California legislation on sexual education curriculum has implemented the previously mentioned suggestions and could be looked to for guidance on how to implement these changes. The connection between a sufficient sexual education and lower rates of teen pregnancies, unintended pregnancies, in general, abortion rates, the spreading of STIs, and sexual violence is something that can no longer be ignored.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,  
Your concerned constituents: Katelyn Montanez, Enshirah Barakat, Natalie Hayek