

Improving Sexual Health Education

HB 2234 (Rehder) | HB 2285 (Quade) | SB 788 (Nasheed)

What Do the Bills Do?

HB 2234 & HB 2285 require course materials and instruction relating to human sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases to contain information about **sexual harassment, sexual violence, and consent.**

Why is this Important?

- 81 percent of students in grades 8 to 11 **report sexual harassment**; 87 percent **say it has had a negative effect** on them.¹
- In a five-year study on bullying and sexual harassment in Illinois, **43 percent** of middle school students reported they had been victims of verbal sexual harassment during the prior year.²
- Teaching young people about the **skills of consent** can help reduce sexual coercion, harassment, and even assault.³
- More than **half of all rapes of females** occur before age 18; 22 percent occur before the age of 12.³

What Else Needs to be Done?

In addition to adding sexual harassment, sexual violence, and consent to Missouri's sexual education law, Missouri Family Health Council urges the legislature to strengthen the law by: **(1)** Requiring all public schools teach age-appropriate, medically accurate sexual health education in order for young people to make healthy, informed choices; and **(2)** Removing barriers as to whom can teach sexual health education in order to allow for experts in the classroom.

- **Comprehensive sex education works.** Research has repeatedly found that sex education which provides accurate, complete, and developmentally appropriate information on human sexuality, including risk-reduction strategies and contraception, helps young people take steps to protect their health.⁴
- The rate of sexually transmitted infections (**STIs**) is **high among young people** in the U.S. Young people ages 15-24 contract almost half of the nation's 19 million new STIs every year, and the CDC estimates that one in four young women aged 15-19 has an STI.⁵
- **Missouri's teen birth rate is higher than the national average**, with 35 teens per 1,000 giving birth, compared to 31 teens per 1,000 nationwide in 2011.⁶



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Citations on reverse.

Citations

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- 2) Espelage, Dorothy L., et al. "Understanding types, locations, & perpetrators of peer-to-peer sexual harassment in U.S. middle schools: A focus on sex, racial, and grade differences." Children and Youth Services Review (2016). DOI: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2016.11.010
- 3) Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. "Teach Consent." Retrieved from: <http://www.teachconsent.org/#ask/>
- 4) Alford S, et al. Science and Success: Sex Education and Other Programs that Work to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, HIV & Sexually Transmitted Infections. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth, 2008.
- 5) CDC. STD Surveillance Report, 2006. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2008.
- 6) SIECUS State Profile: Missouri. Adolescent Sexual Health Promotion At a Glance. 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www.siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=document.viewDocument&documentid=290&documentFormatId=350&vDocLinkOrigin=1&CFID=28851889&CFTOKEN=62cb39fce740a1ed-D5ACDDB6-1C23-C8EB-8004BEDA4FA694A7>