



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Senator Krueger Renews Call for Passing the Healthy Teens Act: Says New York's Teens Need Proper Sex Education

LIZ KRUEGER May 19, 2008

Albany— State Senator Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan) joined health advocates yesterday in urging Majority Leader Joe Bruno to bring the Healthy Teens Act to the Senate floor for a vote. The Healthy Teens Act (S1342) will create a system for providing grants to schools for the purpose of developing age appropriate, medically accurate sex education.

"Proper sex education is a necessary part of any school curriculum," said Senator Krueger. "We don't want our children to trade false information in their school yards and cafeterias. They all talk about sex. We need them to get the facts that can protect their lives from sexually transmitted disease and avoid unwanted pregnancy."

Family Planning Advocates of New York State has organized a week long effort to raise awareness of the need for the Healthy Teens Act. The week began with events in Albany, including petition signings and lobbying legislators, and will culminate with local events in each Senator's home districts. They have also set up a link on their website

<http://www.fpaofnys.org/> which directs people to send letters in support of the Healthy Teens Act.

The Healthy Teens Act has passed the State Assembly for the past four years, including in 2008. Unfortunately, the Senate has never had the opportunity to vote on the bill due to

Senator Bruno's determination not to bring it to the floor for consideration.

Presently New York schools have no requirement to teach students any sex education, be it abstinence or contraception. Even if a school chose to implement a sex education program there is no dedicated line of State funding. Some schools do teach sex ed but only at the discretion of the school district.

"Age appropriate and medically accurate sex education should be mandatory," stated Senator Krueger. "The statistics are quite scary and we cannot expect to change them if we do not provide schools with the funds they need."

The most recent study by the Center for Disease Control shows some staggering statistics:

1 in 4 teenage girls between 14 and 19 years old has contracted at least one of the most common STIs (human papillomavirus (HPV), chlamydia, herpes simplex virus, and trichomoniasis). African Americans teens were at the highest risk with almost 50% having contracted an STI.

40,000 of New York's teens will become pregnant this year, among the highest rate in the nation.

60% of high school seniors in New York will have sex before they graduate.

"This explosion of sexually transmitted disease will only worsen if Senator Bruno doesn't move this legislation now," stated Senator Krueger. "Our children need to be taught in their homes and their classrooms. This legislation also stresses that curricula be developed that encourages communication about sexuality issues between parents and children."

"We need a policy in this state that teaches our youth to make responsible decisions when they are thinking about becoming sexually active," concluded Senator Krueger. "Age-appropriate sex education will ensure that New York's teens are getting the information

they need when they need to be learning it."

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