



Human Rights Committee –Introduced

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Sexual Violence Education Position
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Position Statement:

SIYAC supports legislation pertaining to mandating sexual violence education in high school

Position

It is the Position of the State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council that mandating the implementation of sexual violence prevention curriculum in Iowa's high schools' ought to be enacted.

Rationale

Students face the threat of sexual abuse every day, beginning from a young age and continuing into adulthood. However, within public schools, the topic is considered taboo and therefore not discussed in an educational setting. [1] Today, 1 in 71 men and 1 in 5 women have reported experiencing rape at some point in their lives, and 79% of sexual assaults will take place before age 25. [2] Additionally, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. During one year, this equates to more than 10 million human beings. These statistics make it clear that nobody is safe in this society. We have an epidemic in our country and state concerning sexual violence and unhealthy relationships. This problem begins with the lack of education students receive concerning these topics. With many schools in Iowa requiring little to no education on this topic, we are observing that our students are leaving high school and going into college with minimal knowledge on important topics such as consent, healthy relationships, and sexually transmitted diseases. [3]As of January 1st, 2015 19 states have enacted legislation requiring sexual education concerning topics such as healthy relationships, sexually transmitted diseases, and some have enacted education concerning consent.

Recommended Action

To combat sexual assault in high schools and prevent sexual assault in colleges, we must implement a consent-based sexual education curriculum called Safe Dates in the 434 public high schools of Iowa. [4] This curriculum puts into action education pertaining to healthy relationships and sexual consent. While sexually transmitted disease education is not specifically included within the curriculum, there are two chapters that briefly deal with STDs and can be expanded. The curriculum will ensure that affirmative consent is defined as affirmative, conscious, and voluntary agreement to engage in and throughout any sexual activity. It can be revoked at any time.

[4] On average, Safe Dates is a 10 chapter, 2-3 week curriculum that can be implemented within the schools' health or physical education classes. There is an option for teacher training within the curriculum that is highly recommended but not required, While the curriculum is required to be taught within these classes, parents have the option to opt their children out of these programs if they so choose.

Because of the national epidemic of sexual assault and domestic violence, Iowa is in a position to educate and prevent these atrocities from happening. In order to stop this terrible plague burdening our youth, we need to start

implementing education and curriculum dealing with consent and healthy relationships. If we implement this curriculum, we will see a decrease in sexual and domestic violence in Iowa and an increase in awareness in high school students concerning consensual sex and healthy relationships.

We hope you will consider these positions and pass this piece of legislation in order to protect and educate the youth of Iowa.

Sources:

1- "Sexual Violence Facts at a Glance." (n.d.): n. pag. *Center for Disease Control Violence Prevention*. Center for Disease Control, 2012. Web. 3 Jan. 2016.

2- "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey 2010 Summary Report." *National Center for Injury Prevention and Control*. Center for Disease Control, 2010. Web. 03 Jan. 2016

3- "State Policies on Sex Education in Schools." *State Policies on Sex Education in Schools*. National Conference on State Legislatures, 1 Jan. 2015. Web. 03 Jan. 2016.

4- "Safe Dates." *Prevention Program for Dating Abuse*. Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2016.