

From: O'Day, James - Rep.(HOU)

Sent: Thursday, January 16, 2014 3:54 PM

To: HOU-DL - HOUSE REPS; HOU-DL - HOUSE AIDES; HOU-DL - HOUSE STAFF; SEN-DL-SENATORS; SEN-DL-ALLSTAFF

Subject: HB 3793 - Healthy Youth Bill FACTS

Dear Colleagues,

I have heard from several of you over the past couple of days with regards to emails that you have been receiving on HB 3793, An Act Relative to Healthy Youth. I hope that the below information will alleviate and dispel any legitimate concerns that you, my colleagues have about this Bill.

I first filed the Healthy Youth Bill in 2011 for several reasons: the state's teen pregnancy rate remains high and must decline; STI rates amongst young people are soaring; and because we have seen many cases of domestic violence - even to the point of homicide - in our state.

Let me be clear: the Healthy Youth Bill does not strip away local control in any way. Each individual school district will still determine on its own whether or not to offer a health education curriculum. The bill ensures that if schools do offer a health ed curriculum that the information taught is based in fact. Model, fact-based curricula are comprehensive and offer information about both abstinence and contraception, in addition to lessons on negotiation skills, mutual respect and communication in relationships. The bill also strengthens the state's current law allowing parents to opt their student out of class if they do not wish for them to participate.

Opponents of this bill will distort it's aim and go to any length to kill this bill. But I know that in the House we will see through these distortions. The bill absolutely does NOT allow schools to teach young girls how to get abortions without parental consent. It also would NOT interfere with local control. It would NOT dictate the age or grade level when health education begins. And it will NOT remove any rights from parents who do not want their child to receive instruction on health education.

I wrote this bill with 2 people in mind: my 2 sons. While I, as their parent, will be their primary health educator, I rely on school to teach them the basics. Just like in every other subject. It is important for students to have this information. I think this is a good bill. I look forward to helping my son with his health homework, just as I try to help him with his math homework. I hope you will join me in supporting this bill's passage.

Rep. Jim O'Day