

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 20, 2011

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Dicks:

On behalf of our constituents who believe there needs to be a balanced approach in sex education, we request that the Appropriations Committee provide a dedicated abstinence education funding stream of at least one-half of all funds used for sex education. This request will not increase the 2012 budget but will reprioritize a portion of those funds for the important risk avoidance message inherent in abstinence education.

Federal community-based abstinence education programs are strongly supported by parents and 22 separate studies have demonstrated their effectiveness. Unfortunately, funding for these programs was eliminated in FY10 and FY11. Today, only a small amount remains within the confines of the health care reform bill, but this abstinence funding goes directly to the states and not necessarily to direct educational services for youth. While administration officials promised that abstinence programs could apply for funding under the new discretionary Teen Pregnancy Prevention program, less than 5% was awarded to abstinence programs. Of greater concern, however, is the fact that this program omits any priority on abstinence. Therefore, unless a unique program is re-established that prioritizes the risk avoidance abstinence message, adolescents will be largely without access to the tools they need to delay sexual activity.

Opponents of abstinence education claim these programs are not effective, yet 22 peer-reviewed studies show that strong abstinence-centered education programs reduce teen sexual initiation, reduce the number of sexual partners (a crucial determinant in acquiring an STD), and does not deter the use of condoms. By re-establishing support for abstinence education programs, we assure that communities have a true choice in preventing the possible negative consequences of teen sexual activity.

This is not a partisan issue. Abstinence education programs were first funded under former President Bill Clinton and have since received bi-partisan support. This is a public health message that we think should be continued and we urge you to appropriate the necessary funds to support programs that focus exclusively on abstinence.

Respectfully,



Bill Flores



Dan Boren



Joe Barton



Jeff Duncan



Jeffery Landry



Lynn A. Westmoreland

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Randy J. Forbes



Joseph R. Pitts

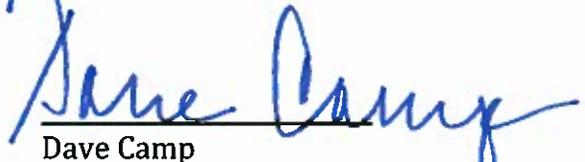


Roscoe G. Bartlett



Dan Burton

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Dave Camp



Daniel Lipinski



Michael T. McCaul



Joe Wilson



Marsha Blackburn



Steve King



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