



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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WCC TO PLANNED PARENTHOOD: RESPECTING PARENTS, LOCAL LEADERS IS NO DANGER TO CHILDREN

Planned Parenthood's charge that deferring action on controversial legislation relating to sex education plays politics is off base, according to the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC).

Kim Wadas, Associate Director for Education and Health Care at the WCC, defended a decision to defer a vote on Assembly Bill 458. The bill would require schools to follow a state-mandated curriculum for human growth and development instruction if and when school districts choose to offer such instruction.

"There is a difference between playing politics and prudent policy making," Wadas said. "Delaying final action on a controversial bill that didn't even exist a little over a month ago seems prudent," said Wadas, "especially when we are redefining the role of parents and local school leaders in this crucial area."

Currently, local school boards have the discretion and flexibility to create sex education programs that are best suited to the needs of their students and community. School boards are required to seek the input of an advisory committee comprised of teachers, students, parents, administrators, medical professionals, members of the faith community, and other community leaders when developing human growth and development curricula. AB 458 replaces that with a mandated curriculum.

Wadas also noted that in criticizing the Assembly for its deliberate treatment of AB 458, Planned Parenthood failed to mention all the elements of the bill.

"AB 458 restricts funding to only those teen pregnancy prevention programs that can demonstrate increased contraceptive use," she explained. "It doesn't matter if an abstinence-focused program can demonstrate an actual reduction in teen pregnancy. Under the terms of this bill, that program cannot be supported with federal funds in Wisconsin," Wadas observed.

"As noted in our testimony in opposition to this bill, opinions differ as to the best way to educate children about their sexuality and to reduce teen pregnancy. However, the assertion that those who oppose the approach contained in AB 458 endanger children is not helpful to the debate. We reject the notion that protecting parental control endangers the lives of children," Wadas concluded.

The WCC continues to urge parents and other concerned individuals to contact their legislators and request their opposition to this legislation.

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The WCC's website features a copy of its testimony. For more information, contact Kim Wadas or Barbara Sella, 608-257-0004.