

THE REAL EDUCATION FOR HEALTHY YOUTH ACT

A federal vision for comprehensive sex education building on existing programs' success

Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) have introduced the *Real Education for Healthy Youth Act* (REHYA), legislation that supports the health and well-being of young people by providing them with the comprehensive sex education they need to make informed and healthy decisions throughout their lives.

YOUNG PEOPLE NEED AND HAVE THE RIGHT TO QUALITY SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Current federal investments in adolescent health promotion programs are an important step in the right direction, but much remains to be done to strengthen, enhance, and expand sex education efforts to meet the needs and rights of all young people.

The availability and quality of sexual health information and sex education varies drastically across the country. Less than half of all high schools and only 20% of middle schools in the U.S. provide all 16 of the CDC-identified topics critical to ensuring sexual health. ([CDC](#)) In addition, many young people face barriers to accessing health information and services, resulting in persistent inequity and health disparities. ([CDC](#))

REHYA EXPANDS QUALITY SEX EDUCATION ACROSS THE NATION

- ✓ Establishes criteria and instruction topics—addressing human development; healthy relationships, personal skills, sexual behaviors including abstinence, contraception, and decision-making; sexual health; gender; and society and culture—by which sex education programs must adhere to receive federal funding and restricts funds for programs that fail to meet a minimum standard and responsiveness to the needs of young people
- ✓ Creates grants for age-, developmentally, culturally appropriate, medically accurate and complete, and evidence-informed comprehensive sex education for adolescents ages 10–19 and young people in institutions of higher education
- ✓ Creates grants for professional development and teacher training for elementary and secondary education sex educators
- ✓ Amends the *Public Health Service Act* and the *Every Student Succeeds Act* to enable education that does not stigmatize sex, is non-shaming of LGBTQ students, and is inclusive of contraceptive access in schools
- ✓ Eliminates and reprograms the Social Security Act Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage state grant program to fund the new comprehensive sex education and training grant programs

THE RESEARCH DEMONSTRATES THE NEED AND SUPPORTS THE SOLUTION

The data highlights the need for additional resources to provide sex education for young people to equip them with the information and skills they need to make healthy decisions:

- HIV infection rates are increasing among young people, particularly among young men who have sex with men. ([CDC](#)) Young people under the age of 25 account for 1 in 5 new HIV infections. ([CDC](#))
- Half of the nearly 20 million estimated new diagnoses of STIs each year in the U.S. occur among people ages 15–24. ([CDC](#))
- 75% of pregnancies among young people ages 15–19 are unintended. ([Guttmacher Institute](#))
- A devastating 10% of high school students report experiencing partner violence and/or sexual violence. ([CDC](#))

Three decades of research show that providing young people with medically accurate and complete science-based information and skills supports their sexual health and well-being:

- Sexual health education can help young people delay sexual initiation, and young people who receive sexual health education are more likely to use protection when they do become sexually active. ([Guide to Community Preventive Services](#))
- Medical and public health organizations, as well as an overwhelming majority of Americans, including young people and parents—regardless of party affiliation—support sexuality education. ([FoSE](#); [HuffPo/YouGov](#); [Public Religion Research Institute](#))

REHYA IS SUPPORTED BY 63 NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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