

1992 REPORT CARD ON THE STATES Sexual Rights in America

Debra W. Haffner

Executive Director, SIECUS

A central component of SIECUS' mission is to advocate for the rights of individuals to make responsible sexual choices. These rights include the right to information, the right to sexual health services, the right to engage in sexual behaviors with consenting adults, the right to live according to one's sexual orientation, and the right to obtain and use sexually explicit materials.

Recent Supreme Court decisions have delivered a clear message: the federal government through its Court decisions cannot be relied upon to protect individual sexual rights. In at least three recent decisions — *Bowers v. Hardwick*, *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* and *Barnes v. Glen Theater* — the Supreme Court affirmed the right of states to pass legislation that limit specific sexual rights.

As a result of these decisions, states will play an increasingly important role in affirming or restricting sexual rights. Across the United States, there exists a patchwork of state legislation on sexuality-related issues. This review discusses and "grades" state laws on sexuality education, HIV/AIDS education, abortion, sexual orientation, sexual behaviors, and obscenity laws, and includes a state-by-state analysis on state legislation that may promote or restrict sexual rights.

Sexuality and HIV/AIDS Education

Forty-seven states (including the District of Columbia) now either mandate or recommend sexuality education. Seventeen states have a legislative requirement that all school districts provide sexuality education to their students at some level. Twelve states require sexuality education from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Only four states — Massachusetts, Mississippi, South Dakota, and Wyoming — have no position on sexuality education.

Forty-eight states (including the District of Columbia) either mandate or recommend HIV/AIDS education. Thirty-three states mandate teaching about HIV/AIDS at some levels, and fifteen additional states encourage its teaching. Only Ohio, Wyoming, and Tennessee are silent on HIV/AIDS education.¹ Fifteen states require HIV/AIDS education, yet these states

either only recommend or are silent on sexuality education.

A state mandate is a requirement that all school districts provide sexuality education and/or HIV/AIDS education to their students. Mandates are usually accompanied by suggested curricula to be implemented at the local level. State program reviews have indicated that the existence of a state mandate does not necessarily translate into programs in every school in the state. However, a legislative mandate does provide a legal basis for programs to be implemented at the local level.

In contrast, a recommendation refers only to a provision by the state legislature or the state department of education that recommends or encourages local communities to include sexuality topics in their programs. While curricula may be suggested, each local district can decide whether a program on these subjects will be implemented. In general, state recommendations suggest that sexuality education or family life education topics be a component of comprehensive health education programs.

SIECUS has revised its 1991 review of state mandates based on information submitted by SIECUS members about their states.² Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, North Carolina, and Oregon have been re-evaluated and determined to have recommendations, not mandates. In each case, the state has a mandate for comprehensive health education; family life education, growth and development, or sexuality education are listed as potential components. However, there is no requirement for local districts to teach this component as part of fulfilling the state mandate. Thus, sexuality education can only be said to be recommended in these states.

During the 1991 legislative year, no state passed additional requirements for sexuality education.³ Since the last publication of SIECUS' annual review of state sexuality and HIV/AIDS education mandates, it has been brought to our attention that as of September 1991, Florida's mandate for comprehensive sexuality education requires teaching about human sexuality in kindergarten through twelfth grade. In Arizona, a state Board of Education hearing expanded the time allowed to be spent on sexuality education and recommended

comprehensive health education skills be taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade. This hearing was approved by the state Board of Education on May 29, 1990, and includes provisions for sexuality and HIV/AIDS education.

Two states enacted mandates on HIV/AIDS education in 1991. California passed a mandate for HIV/AIDS education during the 1991 session.⁴ Arizona enacted a law requiring public schools to provide instruction on HIV/AIDS to kindergarten through twelfth grade students. The curriculum must promote abstinence, discourage drug abuse, and provide accurate information on HIV transmission. No school district may include anything that "promotes a homosexual lifestyle."

Reproductive Rights

The 1989 *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* decision affirmed Missouri law restricting access to abortion in public hospitals and the use of viability tests, thus opening the way for states to restrict access to abortion services. As a result of this decision, state legislatures and state courts have been inundated with abortion-related cases and legislation. During the 1991 legislative term, 293 bills were introduced in 47 legislatures: 181 bills would have restricted abortion rights, while 81 bills sought to protect abortion rights.³

In 1991, Maryland became the third state to pass legislation affirming the rights of the women in the state to obtain legalized abortion, regardless of future U.S. Supreme Court decisions. (The Maryland law does include a parental notification requirement with a physician bypass option.) The Maryland law is currently in abeyance pending a voter referendum in the fall of 1992. A very close public referendum in the state of Washington in November 1991 also affirmed reproductive rights for women in that state. Washington and Maryland join Nevada (by public referendum in November 1990) and Connecticut (through state legislation in 1990) in being the only four states to explicitly protect abortion rights.

During the 1991 legislative session, Louisiana and Utah passed bills outlawing abortion in almost all cases. These laws have been enjoined and are currently in the federal court pipeline. The Louisiana law prohibits all abortions except in cases of life endangerment or cases of rape and incest, if the abortion is performed in the first 13 weeks. There are no provisions for an abortion to save the pregnant woman's health status. Physicians who perform abortions could be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison and \$100,000 in fines. In Utah, all abortions will be outlawed, except if the woman's life is endangered or if there will be "grave damage" to her physical health, to prevent grave fetal defects, and in cases of rape and incest. The penalty to physicians will be a prison term up to five years and a \$5,000 fine.

Several states have also passed severe restrictions on a woman's rights to an abortion. The Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act requires that a woman wait 24 hours before having an abortion after being counseled by a physician, including being shown pictures of fetal

development. This law includes a parental consent requirement as well as a spousal notification requirement. On October 21, 1991, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit unanimously upheld these provisions, except for the spousal notification requirement.⁵ The Supreme Court has agreed to hear the case of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* on the constitutionality of this decision during the current term. (SIECUS has joined as an *amicus curae* in this case.) During 1991, Mississippi, North Dakota, and Ohio passed "informed

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Executive Director, Debra W. Haffner, MPH
Managing Editor, Elizabeth Wilber

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All article, review, advertising, and publication inquiries and submissions should be addressed to the managing editor:

Elizabeth Wilber, Managing Editor
SIECUS Report
SIECUS
130 West 42nd Street, Suite 2500
New York, New York 10036
212/819-9770
fax 212/819-9776

Editorial Board
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consent" legislation, requiring the provision of detailed information on fetal growth along with a mandated waiting period to all abortion patients. South Dakota and Nebraska had previously passed such legislation. New legislation in Mississippi also gives the state health department broad authority to regulate abortion clinics, as does Missouri law.

The vast majority of states have now passed legislation mandating parental involvement for abortions for minors. Twenty-six states require parental consent before an abortion is performed (these laws are currently only enforced in 10 states), and 12 states require parental notification (only currently enforced in eight states.) In Maine, young people require either counseling or the consent of a parent or adult relative; Connecticut and Wisconsin require counseling only. Only Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Vermont, and the District of Columbia have no restrictions on minors' access to abortion.⁷

Sexual Orientation and Sexual Behaviors

SIECUS believes that an individual's sexual orientation is an essential quality of humanness and strongly supports the right of each individual to accept, acknowledge, and live in accordance with her/his orientation. Although several cities and localities across the country have passed anti-discrimination legislation, only five states offer broad protection to gay men and lesbians. Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Wisconsin have passed legislation banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

During the 1991 legislative term, California legislators passed a measure banning discrimination against gays and lesbians in employment. The bill added sexual orientation to the groups covered under the state's Fair Employment and Housing Act. In September 1991, Governor Pete Wilson vetoed this legislation.

Seven states have legislation prohibiting sexual behaviors between people of the same sex. These states are Arkansas, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, and Tennessee. In 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a Georgia anti-sodomy law, citing in *Bowers v. Hardwick* that the Constitution "does not protect homosexual relations between adults even in the privacy of their own homes." The Court explicitly denied to say whether the Constitution would protect heterosexuals from prosecution under the same law, and later refused to hear an Oklahoma case on the constitutionality of whether states can make heterosexual sodomy between consenting adults a crime.⁷

Sixteen other states and the District of Columbia have laws either labeling certain sexual activities as "deviate sexual intercourse" and/or criminalizing their practice by either heterosexual or homosexual couples.⁸ Sodomy is often defined as "deviate sexual intercourse" including genital-anal, genital-mouth, manual-anal, or manual-genital contact. Some of the laws are even more extreme. For example, Rhode Island law has a seven- to 20-year prison sentence for anyone convicted of sodomy, defined as

Table One

1992 STATE UPDATE ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION AND HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

	MANDATES		RECOMMENDATIONS	
	Sexuality Educ.	HIV/AIDS Educ.	Sexuality Educ.	HIV/AIDS Educ.
Alabama		•	•	
Alaska		•	•	•
Arizona		•	•	
Arkansas	•	•		
California		•	•	
Colorado			•	•
Connecticut		•	•	
Delaware	•	•		
Dist. of Col.	•	•		
Florida	•	•		
Georgia	•	•		
Hawaii			•	•
Idaho		•	•	
Illinois		•	•	
Indiana		•	•	
Iowa	•	•		
Kansas	•	•		
Kentucky			•	•
Louisiana			•	•
Maine			•	•
Maryland	•	•		
Massachusetts				•
Michigan		•	•	
Minnesota		•	•	
Mississippi				•
Missouri			•	•
Montana			•	•
Nebraska			•	•
Nevada	•	•		
New Hampshire		•	•	
New Jersey	•	•		
New Mexico	•	•		
New York		•	•	
North Carolina		•	•	
North Dakota				•
Ohio			•	
Oklahoma		•	•	
Oregon		•	•	
Pennsylvania		•	•	
Rhode Island	•	•		
South Carolina	•	•		
South Dakota		•		
Tennessee			•	
Texas			•	•
Utah	•	•		
Vermont	•	•		
Virginia	•	•		
Washington		•	•	
West Virginia	•	•		
Wisconsin			•	•
Wyoming				
TOTAL	17	34	30	14

A state mandate is a requirement that all school districts provide sexuality education and/or HIV/AIDS education to their students, usually in the form of family life education programs or comprehensive health education. Mandates are usually accompanied by suggested curricula to be implemented at the local level.

Recommendations refer to any provisions by state legislatures or state departments of education, which support sexuality education and/or HIV/AIDS education, but do not require it. While curricula may be suggested, it is left up to the local districts to design and implement such programs.

Table Two

1992 REPORT CARD ON THE STATES

	Sex Ed Mandate	HIV/AIDS Ed Mandate	Abortion	Minors' Rights	Gay Rights	Sexual Behaviors	Sexually Explicit Materials	Index	Grade
Alabama	•	+	NP	—	NP	—	—	-2	D-
Alaska	•	•	NP	—	NP	NP	NP	1	C
Arizona	•	+	NP	—	NP	—	—	-2	D-
Arkansas	+	+	NP	—	—	—	—	-2	D-
California	•	+	NP	—	NP	NP	—	0	C-
Colorado	•	•	NP	—	NP	NP	—	-1	D
Connecticut	•	+	+	+	+	NP	—	4	A-
Delaware	+	+	NP	—	NP	NP	—	1	C
District of Columbia	+	+	NP	NP	NP	—	—	1	C
Florida	+	+	NP	—	NP	—	—	-1	D
Georgia	+	+	NP	—	—	—	—	-2	D-
Hawaii	•	•	NP	NP	+	—	—	0	C-
Idaho	•	+	NP	—	NP	—	—	-2	D-
Illinois	•	+	NP	—	NP	NP	—	0	C-
Indiana	•	+	NP	—	NP	NP	—	0	C-
Iowa	+	+	NP	NP	NP	NP	—	3	B
Kansas	+	+	NP	NP	—	NP	—	2	B-
Kentucky	•	•	NP	—	—	—	—	-4	F
Louisiana	•	•	—	—	NP	—	—	-4	F
Maine	•	•	NP	—	NP	NP	NP	1	C
Maryland	+	+	+	—	NP	—	—	0	C-
Massachusetts	NP	•	NP	—	+	—	—	-2	D-
Michigan	•	+	NP	—	NP	NP	—	0	C-
Minnesota	•	+	NP	—	NP	—	—	-2	D-
Mississippi	NP	•	—	—	NP	—	—	-4	F

Continued on next page

Key: + = Positive Law — = Negative Law NP = No Policy • = Recommendation

Table Two

1992 REPORT CARD ON THE STATES

	Sex Ed Mandate	HIV/AIDS Ed Mandate	Abortion	Minors' Rights	Gay Rights	Sexual Behaviors	Sexually Explicit Materials	Index	Grade
Missouri	•	•	—	—	—	—	—	-5	F-
Montana	•	•	NP	—	—	—	NP	-2	D-
Nebraska	•	•	—	—	NP	NP	—	-2	D-
Nevada	+	+	+	—	—	—	—	-1	D
New Hampshire	•	+	NP	NP	NP	NP	—	2	B-
New Jersey	+	+	NP	NP	+	NP	—	4	A-
New Mexico	+	+	NP	—	NP	NP	NP	3	B
New York	•	+	NP	NP	NP	NP	—	2	B-
North Carolina	•	+	NP	NP	NP	—	—	0	C-
North Dakota	•	•	—	—	NP	NP	—	-2	D-
Ohio	•	NP	—	—	NP	NP	—	-2	D-
Oklahoma	•	+	NP	NP	NP	—	NP	2	B-
Oregon	•	+	NP	NP	NP	NP	—	2	B-
Pennsylvania	•	+	—	—	NP	NP	—	-1	D
Rhode Island	+	+	NP	—	NP	—	—	-1	D
South Carolina	+	+	NP	—	NP	—	—	-1	D
South Dakota	NP	+	—	—	NP	NP	NP	1	C
Tennessee	•	NP	NP	—	—	—	—	-4	F
Texas	•	•	NP	NP	NP	NP	—	1	C
Utah	+	+	—	—	NP	—	—	-2	D-
Vermont	+	+	NP	NP	NP	NP	—	3	B
Virginia	+	+	NP	—	NP	—	—	-1	D
Washington	•	+	+	—	NP	NP	—	1	C
West Virginia	+	+	NP	—	NP	NP	NP	3	B
Wisconsin	•	•	NP	+	+	NP	—	2	B-
Wyoming	NP	NP	NP	—	NP	NP	—	-1	D

Key: + = Positive Law — = Negative Law NP = No Policy • = Recommendation

"the abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with any beast" regardless of the gender of one's partner. Massachusetts has a similar law, but also have a separate law against "unnatural and lascivious acts" including fellatio, cunnilingus, and anilingus.⁹

Several state courts have struck down these sodomy laws as violating the civil rights of people in the state. Nevertheless, the *Bowers* decision still stands, permitting states to prosecute people under these laws.

Sexually Explicit Materials

SIECUS affirms adults' right of access to sexually explicit materials for personal use. According to the Media Coalition, there is no state that explicitly affirms the right of adults to obtain and use sexually explicit materials.¹⁰

In fact, the majority of states have state laws prohibiting the distribution or availability of "obscene materials." The difficulty is that the definition of "obscenity" can only be decided by a determination of each community's standards. In the 1973 decision, *Miller v. California*, the Supreme Court established a three-part test for obscenity: obscene materials must appeal to the "prurient interest in sex," portray sexual conduct in a "patently offensive way," and lack "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value." Leonard Chipkin, an assistant district attorney in Nassau County, New York, aptly states, "Obscenity is the only crime where a jury decides not whether someone committed a crime, but whether in fact a crime was committed. They have to decide whether it was obscene."¹¹

Obscenity laws have often had a chilling effect. Bookstores and music stores have been reported to pull records and books as a result of these threats. A new proposed law (S. 1521, the Pornography Victim's Compensation Act) would hold the producers and distributors of books, videos, and movies liable for disseminating materials that allegedly "cause a sexual attack." (See article by Carole S. Vance on page 21 for more information about this bill.)

It would be preferable for states to have laws affirming the right of adults to obtain and use sexually explicit materials in private. As noted above, no state has such a law. Thus, at the current time, it may be preferable for states to not have obscenity laws, for such states are more likely to allow for the availability of explicit materials for adult private use. States that do not have such laws are Alaska, Maine, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, and West Virginia.¹¹

State by State Analysis

In an effort to compare states on their support for sexual rights, each state was analyzed on the state legislation discussed above. A sexual rights index was compiled for each state based on state legislation on sexuality education, HIV/AIDS education, abortion, support for minors rights, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and absence of sodomy and obscenity laws. One point was given for a legislative mandate for sexuality education and one point was given for such a mandate for HIV/AIDS education.

States affirming abortion rights were given one point, and states with abortion restrictions were given a minus one. States that have no policy on this issue were not rated. States that either support minors access to abortion or do not have laws restricting such access were given one point. States that restrict minors' access received a minus one. States that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation were given one point; states that were silent on this issue were not rated because of the need for such state laws in the absence of federal protection. States prohibiting sexual behaviors between gay and lesbian consenting adults were given a minus one. Because no state has legislation supporting sexual behaviors between consenting adults or access to sexually explicit materials, states received one point if they did not have sodomy or obscenity laws, and minus one if they did. A maximum of seven points could be obtained, with a minimum score of minus five, for states that have no protective legislation and that restrict abortion rights (for both teenagers and adults), sexually explicit materials, and consensual behaviors. Grades from A-minus to F-minus are given that correspond with each state's final index score.

As *Table Two* and *Table Three* dramatically illustrate, no state consistently supports sexual rights as determined by this analysis of state laws. Only Connecticut and New Jersey received an A minus grade rating. Iowa, New Mexico, Vermont, and West Virginia have measures rating a grade B in these areas.

Twelve additional states scored a B-minus or a C, indicating some support in these areas.

The majority of the states scored a C-minus or lower. Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee ranked the lowest of all of the states, receiving an F or an F-minus, having no measures to protect sexual rights and having passed limitations on access to abortion, sexually explicit materials, and sexual behaviors.

A Call To Action

The need for activism on the state level is dramatic and should be self-evident to SIECUS members and other advocates for sexual rights. Because one cannot count on the federal government to assure the protection of a panoply of sexual rights, advocates will increasingly need to work to assure that these rights are protected on a state level. Ideally, all states would have legislation:

- Mandating sexuality and HIV/AIDS education.
- Affirming abortion rights for all women, including adolescents.
- Affirming the rights of consenting adults to engage in sexual behaviors without interference.
- Prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, living arrangements on the basis of sexual orientation.
- Affirming the rights of adults to obtain and use sexually explicit materials if they desire to do so.

All sexuality professionals have an essential role to

Table Three

SUMMARY OF STATE SCORES

GRADE A-

CONNECTICUT
NEW JERSEY

GRADE B

IOWA
NEW MEXICO
VERMONT
WEST VIRGINIA

GRADE B-

KANSAS
NEW HAMPSHIRE
NEW YORK
OKLAHOMA
OREGON
WISCONSIN

GRADE C

ALASKA
DELAWARE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MAINE
SOUTH DAKOTA
TEXAS
WASHINGTON

GRADE C-

CALIFORNIA
HAWAII
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
MARYLAND
MICHIGAN
NORTH CAROLINA

GRADE D

COLORADO
FLORIDA
NEVADA
PENNSYLVANIA
RHODE ISLAND
SOUTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA
WYOMING

GRADE D-

ALABAMA
ARIZONA
ARKANSAS
GEORGIA
IDAHO
MASSACHUSETTS
MINNESOTA
MONTANA
NEBRASKA
NORTH DAKOTA
OHIO
UTAH

GRADE F

KENTUCKY
LOUISIANA
MISSISSIPPI
TENNESSEE

GRADE F-

MISSOURI

play in promoting sexual rights. This analysis provides a starting point for developing a plan of action in every state and for improving the sexual health of the nation.

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FEDERAL CENSORSHIP AND THE “WAR ON PORNOGRAPHY”

Philip D. Harvey

Founder and President, PHE, Inc.

Do adults have the right to use sexually explicit material in the privacy of their homes?

In the conservative community of Rocky Mount, North Carolina, that was exactly what a random selection of people was recently asked in a newspaper poll.¹ The specific issue was whether adult videos should be available for rental in local stores. These are some of their responses:

“I don’t approve of X-rated videos, yet if minors are not involved, I think they should be available.”

“If the renters are over 21 and children are not involved, then I think people should have the right to rent cassettes like that.”

“If that’s what people choose to do, yes. It’s a matter of personal choice.”

“Personally, I’m against them. But people have the right to view what they want in their homes.”

This small survey, taken right in the back yard of Senator Jesse Helms, is no aberration. Whenever the issue is raised, Americans speak out strongly for their right to read, see, and think what they wish, whatever the subject — sex included — and for the right of others to do the same.

This fundamental respect for the right to privacy is, of course, one of our greatest national achievements. It has produced a freedom that has fueled the growth of our nation, won us the envy of most of the peoples of the world, and helped inspire by example the breakdown of Communism. Yet the crowning irony is that this freedom that Americans hold so dear, and which is on the rise elsewhere, is under attack today by government at all levels here at home. The government censors are out in force and sex is their target.

The assault began in earnest in 1986, when the report of the Meese Commission on Pornography, employing a brand of fearmongering reminiscent of the McCarthyism of the 50s, claimed that pornography was rampant everywhere and was undermining our society.² The campaign has gained considerable momentum ever since. The most publicized cases have involved the photography of Robert Mapplethorpe and the music of 2 Live Crew, but the chill of sexual censorship has been felt in many other places. It has taken these forms:

- The enactment of new laws and ordinances restricting what video stores may sell or rent. A sweeping measure pending in Michigan, for example, would give the police new powers to go after explicit

material on records, computers, tapes, and compact discs and would raise fines against video stores found guilty of renting obscene movies from \$5,000 to \$100,000.

- A revival of controversy over sexuality education in the schools, as seen in the rise of abstinence-only curricula, e.g. *Sex Respect*, *Teen-Aid*, and others emerging nationwide.
- The blunting of effective public health campaigns for safer sex, as exemplified by the amendment sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms prohibiting federal agencies from engaging in HIV/AIDS education and prevention efforts that might be construed as promoting sexual activity or drug use.
- The muzzling of doctors in family planning clinics via the so-called “gag rule” that would prevent health care professionals in government-funded clinics from giving women the same information about pregnancy and abortion that is available from private physicians.
- Police raids on the studios of photographers and artists on spurious grounds of “child pornography.” The case of San Francisco photographer Jock Sturges has been widely publicized — but other artists have had their work seized as well.
- Record numbers of federal obscenity prosecutions — adult pornography investigations jumping from 81 during 1981-85 to 222 during the past five years.³
- Questionable legislation like the Child Protection Act of 1988, consisting of 65 pages, only two of which concern child protection. This law contains forfeiture provisions that allow prosecutors to seize assets of stores selling or renting both nonsexual and adult materials — including stores whose adult materials represent only a small fraction of their sales, and contains unreasonable recordkeeping and labeling requirements for *any* sexually explicit photograph or film.
- A Supreme Court ruling against nude dancers and the draping of a black plastic sheet over a painting of a partially nude women in a new federal building in Sacramento.
- The cancellation by Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan of two surveys, one on adults’ sexual habits, and one on teenage health attitudes and practices, both of which, many experts insist, are essential in order to understand and control the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

Repression Rising

As this climate has spread, it has produced other results that are less visible, but no less harmful. Several therapists have told me that they see a rise in sexual repression and its resultant psychological ills, and researchers in various disciplines privately concede that it has become unwise to study sexual subjects that might embroil them in controversy. Thus, our society appears to have reached that most dangerous stage of censorship when even professional people begin censoring their own actions.

The inescapable conclusion seems to be that government interference in sexual matters is at its highest peak in decades, perhaps since the turn of the last century.

Spearheading and giving federal encouragement to this movement is a 13-lawyer obscenity unit in the U.S. Justice Department. A creation of the Meese Commission, this unit has undertaken a mission no less than the elimination all sexually explicit material that it considers offensive, whether or not the material is protected by the First Amendment. This has included *Playboy* magazine and Alex Comfort's popular book, *The Joy of Sex*.⁴

"...the chief harm from pornography comes not from its use but from attempts at its suppression."

A recent study by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) documented many of the obscenity unit's legally questionable tactics and led the ACLU to call for its abolition.⁵ Among other things, this study drew upon evidence uncovered in a lawsuit that PHE, Inc. brought against the Justice Department showing that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.) was so appalled by the obscenity unit's cavalier way of operating that it refused to cooperate with it. Various F.B.I. officials labeled the unit's leaders as zealots motivated mainly by religious beliefs.⁶ And the ugly truth is that these beliefs are now being imposed on everyone — with all the power and authority of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Government censorship and interference in sexual matters is harmful at any time, but it is particularly so in the present day. With HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancies, and so many other sexually related problems having become epidemic, there is a desperate need for honest, open, and responsible public discussion of sexuality. Yet the chill applied by government has put such discussion in desperately short supply and encouraged the flourishing of a fig-leaf mentality.

A major irony is that this represents a distinctly minority viewpoint that flies in the face of good old-fashioned American common sense. As I have stated, most Americans recognize the great danger in trying to regulate private behavior; they reject any suggestion that government has the right to tell them how to lead their lives, and they lack the fear of sexuality that seems to lie at the heart of the censorship effort. This is confirmed by a Roper Organization poll of June,

1991, which found that, contrary to government policy, 81% of those questioned agreed it may take "pretty explicit sexual material" to teach teenagers about HIV/AIDS and 64% favored distributing condoms in senior high schools.⁷

The Need to Speak Out

It is easy to over-dramatize where the government's activities may lead. Yet, it is also a fact of history in this century that when totalitarian governments have come to power, their first actions have included efforts to "improve morality." This tendency is alive today in places where religious fundamentalists have gained the ascendancy and where the establishment of "sexual correctness" has been accompanied by the imposition of political and religious values by the dominant group on all others — trampling tolerance, respect for diversity, and freedom in the process. Restricting a woman's right to dress as she chooses and to work outside the home is but one example of this kind of repression found in several Middle Eastern countries, for example. Moreover, there is an eerie parallel here in the United States, in the movement to coercively restrict a woman's right to choose for herself when it comes to abortion.

Thinking citizens *must* speak out against this growing infringement of their privacy and their rights and protest government efforts to label everything sexual that it does not approve of as "pornography," and therefore bad and even criminal.

Used indiscriminately, the very word pornography is a powerful weapon in the hands of those who would suppress any kind of sexually explicit material. It has so many negative connotations in the popular mind that it takes a strong person, indeed, to rise to the defense of anything called "pornographic." Yet unless such a defense is mounted, it seems likely that the "war against pornography" will spread to encompass more and more benign materials and activities.

Defining the Undefinable

When the Meese Commission first assembled, it declared that one of its goals would be to define pornography once and for all. Yet, when its work was over, the Commission had not supplied a definition. It had not done so for the very good reason that pornography is in the eye of the beholder. What constitutes pornography, and is perhaps unacceptable for one person, is perfectly acceptable and innocuous, even beneficial for another. There can be no one definition, because pornography is a matter that individuals define for themselves.

Yet, despite being unable to define what pornography is, the government has nonetheless declared that pornography is harmful and therefore deserves to be condemned, especially if it is "hard core." Just what constitutes "hard core" pornography is never made clear, but the current definition seems to be depictions involving visible sexual intromission, which would, of course, even include such material as *The Joy of Sex*. To base decisions about the legality of sexual material on their explicitness, rather than their usefulness, is, of

course, an absurdity. And how ludicrous it is to imagine a handful of lawyers, most of whom share the same set of religiously and politically inspired beliefs, sitting down and deciding which sexual materials are fit for public consumption, and which are not and therefore must be prosecuted.

The most effective way to head off this campaign is to stress and highlight the facts of the issue, for when this is done, a persuasive case is made for allowing people to make their own decisions about sexually explicit material and wresting that authority from government. And it makes clear the fact that *the chief harm from pornography comes not from its use but from attempts at its suppression.*

Let me clarify that what I am talking about here is "adult" pornography — that which is used by adults, depicts cheerfully consenting adults, and does not involve either children or violence. This is also known as "mainstream" pornography, and it constitutes the vast majority of all such material in America, despite claims by officials who attempt to justify their censorship activity by stating that the harsher forms of pornography predominate.

When the facts about this kind of pornography are assembled, they support the following conclusions:

- Pornography causes no harm and is, in fact, socially and individually useful.
- Pornography does not undermine the social fabric. It is far less harmful than many other legal and acceptable things in our society (see box on this page).
- Pornography does not "exploit" members of our society.
- Pornography laws are counterproductive. They divert resources from combating actual criminal activity. They constitute a governmental attempt to legislate morality — a process that strikes at the heart of our freedoms.

A good way to begin to examine these points is to ask why, if a fellow citizen chooses to pursue her/his own happiness by reading a salacious book, we are justified in labeling that person or her/his bookseller a criminal.

Presumably, interference in the private lives of citizens is justified only when a compelling state interest is served. However, there is no compelling state interest achieved by the criminalization and suppression of pornography. First, unlike yelling "fire!" in a crowded theater, pornography poses no threat to anyone's safety. Second, unlike slander or libel, pornography is not malicious; it threatens no one's reputation or career. And third, we now have a substantial body of social science evidence that clearly indicates that viewing nonviolent adult pornography does not lead to violent or antisocial acts.⁸

When violence is introduced into pornography, research suggests that the attitudes of some viewers tend to harden in ways we may not like, but it is the *violence*, not the sex, that produces the negative results. Indeed, based on their review of all relevant

research, the authors of the most authoritative book on this subject, *The Question of Pornography*, conclude that the R-rated "slasher" movies — seen by millions and often even shown on network TV — are probably the most harmful because they mix sexual themes with horrific acts of violence.⁹ In contrast, nonviolent pornography involving sexual activities between cheerfully consenting adults has consistently been found to be benign. Even the Meese Commission, albeit begrudgingly, conceded this fact, stating: "The fairest conclusion from the social science evidence is that there is no persuasive evidence to date supporting the connection between nonviolent and nondegrading materials and acts of sexual violence, and that there is some, but very limited evidence, indicating that the connection does not exist."¹⁰

Further, such nonviolent pornography also serves useful purposes. Sex therapists routinely prescribe sexually explicit films for patients who do not understand certain sexual functions. These films are also often recommended to couples, as a way to promote improved sexual communication and thus a better sexual relationship.

If pornography causes no harm and indeed has legitimate positive values, the government's efforts to suppress it are revealed for what they really are — attempts to impose an *official* idea of morality on everyone. Not only are such efforts wrong and utterly at odds with principles of freedom, but they have never worked and probably never will.

What Is Harmful?

Another way to view this subject is to examine the extent to which free societies permit, as an aspect of freedom, the use of substances and materials that actually do cause measurable harm. The following comparison of deaths in the United States is revealing:¹¹

DEATHS PER ANNUM CAUSED BY:

Cigarettes	434,000
Alcohol	105,000
Automobiles	49,000
Handguns	8,900
Lightning Strikes	45
Pornography	0

Our society permits use of the first four items and even allows them to be advertised and promoted, yet criminalizes only the sixth item. If the American thirst for freedom is so great that we freely allow our citizens to destroy their lungs with smoke and their livers with alcohol, wreaking havoc not only on themselves, but on their families and others, and adding a great financial burden to society, how can we possibly justify outlawing sexual depictions that do not

destroy life, but so often enhance it? Clearly, there is no acceptable answer.

The morally superior or the naively innocent say, however, that while pornography may not kill, it corrupts. They decry its effect on youth and fear that Main Street may soon become Times Square. Yet stripped of their emotional content, these concerns prove groundless, too.

Effects of Pornography

The vast body of research on this subject has shown that when adults view depictions of consenting sexual acts between adults, the effects are transient and generally positive. They may include short-lived sexual arousal and a slight increase in ordinary sexual behavior for a day or two — effects that can hardly be deemed socially destructive. However, such exposure does not result in a major attitude change, because such fundamental aspects of human nature have repeatedly been shown to be far more influenced by such root elements as family, friends, and one's own life experiences.¹²

Ironically, the way the legal system operates provides empirical proof that pornography is harmless. In obscenity cases, courts routinely subject members of juries, whether or not they are willing, to many hours of exposure to pornographic materials. This is usually preceded by strict admonitions from a judge that the jurors read or view the material in its entirety, so as to render a fully informed verdict. Thousands of Americans have gone through this process. Yet no claim has ever been made that the experience has changed or harmed any of these individuals. Moreover, it is beyond belief that jurors in a case involving truly harmful substances such as, say, cocaine or heroin, would ever be required to consume even the most minute sample of the offending substance as part of the judicial process.

Jurors are not the only people in this situation. Twice in recent decades, American presidents have convened panels of distinguished citizens to review our pornography laws and policies. It should be recalled that the 1970 Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, in contrast to the 1986 Meese Commission, concluded after its lengthier and more in-depth study that pornography was, in the main, benign and that most anti-pornography laws should be abolished.¹³

The members of these commissions spent endless hours, for weeks at a time, being bombarded by pornography, much of it of the most deviant kind. Yet while commission members occasionally expressed boredom over the experience, not one has ever suggested that this exposure damaged their morals or caused them to change their behavior. It surpasses irony that, even though they are living proof of the opposite conclusion, some of these commission members continue to assert that pornography harms.

Another approach taken by would-be censors is to maintain that the very possibility that pornography may fall into the hands of children is enough to justify its ban. Yet our society routinely permits the use of many things that can hurt or even kill excessively

curious children — from the presence in the home of handguns, alcohol, and potentially poisonous medicines and cleansers, to unguarded swimming pools and cars. Rather than ban these hazards, we rely on parents and other adults to take all appropriate precautions and put these items out of harm's way. The same standard should certainly apply to pornography.

Respecting Privacy

Still other critics claim that pornography can pollute their communities and create a harmful environment, especially for the young. This hysterical leap of imagination totally ignores the ability of local governments to legitimately influence the character of their communities through zoning and other laws. Even more importantly, this fails to take into account the crucial distinction present in the law and in common sense between pornography that is used in private and other forms that may be thrust upon unwilling recipients. Thus, it is one thing for a community to mandate, for example, that posters for X-rated videos should not be displayed in store windows on public streets. Yet it is another thing altogether for government at any level to legislate what anyone can see or read in his or her own home, out of sight and sound of the general public.

Perhaps the newest argument used by the anti-pornography crusaders is one that has also been endorsed by some (but by no means all) feminists, namely, that pornography is especially harmful to women because it portrays them in a manner that reinforces sexist stereotypes. The argument was, in fact, one of the major points in the Meese Commission report — an amazing fact, really, when one considers that typical conservative supporters of the Commission, such as Phyllis Schlafly, had previously shown not the slightest scrap of sympathy for any feminist position.

An important point here is to recognize that in the hundreds of new mainstream adult films produced each year women are almost always portrayed as active, enthusiastic, and equal participants in the sexual activity — as women who are, to use Marty Klein's phrase, "lusty without being bad."¹⁴ Yet, in the eyes of the would-be censors, this form of equality appears threatening and "wrong." Some even rationalize that such materials, while they may not *seem* degrading to women, still are, somehow. The mind is boggled by such elliptical reasoning (which pervades the Meese Commission report) and by the view it reflects, of women as innocent children who must be patronized and protected.

A thoughtful treatment of this issue was contained in a report by the ACLU entitled "Polluting the Censorship Debate," which critiqued the Meese Commission report. As the ACLU put it: "Individuals, mainly women, can indeed be hurt by the abusive production or use of pornography. Tragically, the Commission's final recommendations endorse virtually nothing which could make a real difference to the genuine victims of a still sexist culture. Where is the emphasis (or in most cases, even the mention) of strengthening sexual harassment laws...removing spousal immunity in

sexual assault cases; providing meaningful law enforcement assistance to models abused in the production of sexual material? Where is the affirmation of the 1970 Commission's embrace of a serious sexuality education effort to empower the young to have a chance to develop a healthy and balanced view of sexuality in our culture?"¹⁵

Instead of taking this approach, the commission's report simply deplors and indiscriminately condemns all sexual material, virtually ignoring the evidence of its value and the supreme importance of letting individual Americans make their own decisions about such matters.

The Experience in Oregon

The censors have also ignored some real-life experience, especially that involving the state of Oregon. In 1986, the Supreme Court of Oregon declared that its state constitution forbade the criminalization of any form of speech, including sexually explicit speech. In a single stroke, therefore, all pornography in Oregon except that involving children was made legal. To listen to the Meese moralists, one would have expected this action to have caused the earth to tremble, the sky to fall, and all decent behavior to vanish in the state. But what has happened? In actuality, no change whatsoever. The good citizens of Oregon have gone about their business behaving as honestly, ethically, and decently as ever before, and concern about the change in the law has been virtually nonexistent.

After the weakness in all the arguments used to defend anti-pornography laws has been exposed, what remains is the conclusion that these laws boil down to a governmental attempt to legislate morality — a process that strikes at the heart of the most fundamental principles governing a free and democratic society.

The writers of the Constitution, drawing on the ideas of John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and other leaders of the Enlightenment, recognized this. They agreed, as Mill had written, that "the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not sufficient warrant."¹⁶ And they made this sentiment part and parcel of the letter and spirit of our Constitution.

Yet the crusade against sex, which runs directly counter to this wisdom, gains momentum, and threatens to steamroller other liberties that may get in its way. After the Meese Commission rendered its report, the press had a field day ridiculing it. One of the editorial cartoons that followed showed a man and woman in bed, probably husband and wife, with one saying, "Wait ... I think we'd better have our lawyer present." It provided a good laugh, but if we're not careful and make known our opposition to the excesses of the government censors, we may well find that the last laugh is on us.

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FAR RIGHT TAKES AIM AT SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Mark Sedway

People For the American Way

In Kingston, Massachusetts, hundreds of local activists clamored for the removal of a teenage sexuality text from a freshman health class. When that failed to work, they organized a boycott of the class using the book.

In Aspermont, Texas, a group of parents forced the school district to drop a video series for grades 4 through 12 because it discussed sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

In Alabama, the state school board banned vital HIV/AIDS awareness materials from the state approved list in the face of pressure from a coalition of far right organizations.

These incidents are part of a growing wave of censorship ravaging sexuality education in communities and states around the nation. In an ever expanding offensive, grassroots groups backed by national far right organizations are waging a war on schoolbooks and programs.

The problem is only getting worse, according to the latest edition of *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn*, People For the American Way's annual survey of censorship attempts in the public schools. The report documented the most severe and widespread outbreak of school censorship in the ten years since PFAW began monitoring censorship. In particular, PFAW found an alarming number of attacks on sexuality education textbooks and programs in districts around the country — more than one in every ten challenges were to sexuality education programs. Moreover, the attackers' success rate remains disturbingly high. In more than one-third of all incidents, challenged materials were either removed or restricted.

PFAW's research has also documented the emergence of a network of national and local far right groups bent on imposing their own ideological agenda on the schools. Pressure groups such as Donald Wildmon's American Family Association, Robert Simonds' Citizens for Excellence in Education, Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, and James Dobson's Focus on the Family continue to target school programs that do not conform to their narrow sectarian ideology. In response, movement followers are stepping up their local censorship activities.

Nowhere have the growing influence and ideological aims of the far right been more apparent than in recent attacks on sexuality education. Indeed, what at first seem to be isolated challenges in towns around the country take on the shape of a nationally coordinated movement as objections, tactics, and materials repeat themselves in incident after incident. In no small part because of far right support, challenges to sexuality school programs are more frequent, more organized, and more successful than ever before.

A "Cultural Civil War"

The far right's crusade is less concerned with the educational merit than the ideological purity of materials. The two most common reasons for the complaints PFAW has documented: that the books or programs did not endorse the challengers' sectarian or ideological views and that the new censors are not simply concerned with what their children are taught, but what *all* children are taught. In attack after attack, censors request materials be removed from entire classrooms or schools, rather than simply use opt-out provisions to withdraw their own children from certain lessons or activities. Efforts to impose a singular, sectarian view on all children, such as the abstinence-only movement discussed below, bear the hallmark of censorship: the attempt to control what others can read or see.

These attacks reflect a broader political agenda at work. The far right's persistent assault on programs ranging from sexuality education to literature, health and science to libraries betrays their broader aim of reclaiming public education. By controlling the schools, they seek to shape the perceptions and views of an entire generation, and, in turn, to remake American society in their own image.

In another sense, the continuing series of attacks aimed at public education must be viewed in the context of the larger battle — what has come to be known as a "Cultural Civil War" — over free expression. Motion pictures, television programs, fine art, music lyrics, and even political speech have all come under assault in recent years from many of the same religious right leaders behind attacks on school programs. In the vast majority of cases, in the schools and out, challengers generally seek the same remedy, i.e. to restrict what others can see, hear or read. At stake in attacks on schoolbooks and programs is students' exposure to a

broad spectrum of ideas in the classroom — in essence, their freedom to learn. And when the freedom to learn is threatened in sexuality education, students are denied information that can save their lives.

While challenges to sexuality education programs have taken place for years, at least three new factors combine to make the problem more virulent than ever. First, the objectors, bolstered by materials, advice, and suggested targets from national far right organizations, are mounting more organized and potent challenges. Whereas years ago an individual might have commented at a school board meeting, now challengers come with an arsenal of new tactics, such as flooding school board meetings, threatening and sometimes pursuing costly litigation against schools, and pressuring teachers and principals. Second, while the censors have intensified their efforts and sharpened their grassroots organizing, the same cannot be said for supporters of the challenged programs or other advocates of the freedom to learn. In incident after incident, the shouts of the censors are met by whippers. Third, the fear of attacks, disruption, controversy, and costly lawsuits has led more and more teachers, administrators, and school boards to yield to censors' demands. These three factors — more effective tactics, listless resistance, and the fear of controversy — have in turn led to the removal of more programs and materials.

Perhaps the greatest threat, however, is that far right groups have begun to promote narrow, abstinence-only curricula, including *Sex Respect* and *Teen-Aid*, as replacements for more comprehensive programs. This new tactic, and its implications for both sexuality education and the freedom to learn, are discussed later in this article.

Two Case Studies

To better understand how some of the trends discussed above play out in local and state battles, consider two incidents from the 1990-91 school year: a

challenge to a sexuality education program in a small community in Minnesota and a successful attempt to purge critical sexuality education texts from Alabama's state adopted list. These two controversies offer considerable insight into the tactics, objections, and narrow perspective of the censors.

The State Level: Attack in Alabama

For years, far right organizations have targeted textbooks in state adoptions. National and state far right groups have used their growing grassroots and lobbying power to pressure state textbook committees and boards of education to reject crucial textbooks in the areas of history, science, health, and sexuality education. By targeting statewide textbook adoptions, these groups have found they can hold sway over the materials used in every classroom in a state and, with adoptions occurring every six years, the education of an entire generation of students.

In Alabama during the last school year, members and lobbyists from several "pro-family" groups, including Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, James Dobson's Focus on the Family, and the Coalition for Academic Excellence mounted a campaign against 10 texts approved by the state textbook committee, including six health texts dealing with human sexuality, HIV/AIDS prevention, and homosexuality.

The groups contended five books that dealt with contraception and HIV/AIDS were unacceptable because they would give students "a false sense of security about sex with contraceptives."¹ One text, *Married and Single Life*, was found objectionable because it "tries to present homosexuality in a favorable light."¹ In particular, objectors complained about the book's statement that "homosexuals differ little from anyone else, except for their preference."²

Members of the state board of education received as many as 60 letters and phone calls each, urging them to reject the texts. One board member complained that of the 60 people who called her, only one had read any of

SAMPLE INCIDENTS

These challenges to sexuality education materials over the last two years illustrate the objections, targets, and tactics of the censors.

- In CLAYTON COUNTY, GEORGIA, local members of The Christian Coalition, a religious right group, challenged the film *Am I Normal*, used in sexuality education classes in grades 9 through 12, for its discussion of sexual development, masturbation, and homosexuality. The objectors also questioned the entire sexuality education program for not promoting abstinence.
- In HASKELL, TEXAS, parents challenged *Preventing Teen Pregnancy*, a series of videos to be shown to grades four through six, for calling masturbation "normal" and discussing anatomy and sexual development. After a group organized to oppose the video at one school, the community organization that had covered the expenses of showing the videos the previous year chose to cancel its funding for the entire district.
- In KINGSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, a group of parents led by local clergy objected to *The New Teenage Body Book*, and the freshman health class in which it was used, for talking about sexuality, homosexuality and masturbation. The group requested that the book be removed and that it be replaced by *Sex Respect*. Objectors described the book as "a how-to sex manual" that "gives them the green light"¹ and wanted the district to adopt a curriculum that takes a stronger stand against premarital sexual intercourse. A local minister leading the group said that teaching the "how-to's" of sex "is really an encouragement to get involved."² Objectors also submitted a petition to the board calling the textbook "a pompous, thinly disguised how-to manual masquerading as the final scientific word on adolescent sexual behavior."³ When a district-appointed review committee voted to keep the book and not replace it with *Sex Respect*, objectors stepped up their efforts. Led by a local clergyman, the

the texts in question. She said it was also apparent that no other board member had read any of the books. An article in Eagle Forum's newsletter, *Education Reporter*, touted the censorship campaign, reporting that "the books' controversial content came to light after an intense lobbying campaign by several parents' rights groups including Focus on the Family and the Coalition for Academic Excellence."³

In response to the pressure, the state board voted 4 to 3 to strike the books from the state approved list, and left the state without any approved textbook for HIV/AIDS education. The board's decision prevents Alabama schools from purchasing textbooks on HIV/AIDS prevention with state monies until the next textbook adoption cycle in 1996. In the words of one board member, "Once again the children in our poorest school systems who need the information these books provide most of all will not have it."²

The Local Level: Attack in Anoka, Minnesota

Just as insidious are the local efforts of far right groups to remove or seriously alter sexuality education in school districts around the country. As with the state campaigns, local censorship efforts are becoming more threatening as groups become better organized, receive more help from national organizations, and intensify their pressure campaigns on schools and school boards.

Consider the attack on two sexuality education programs in Anoka, Minnesota, a small community just north of Minneapolis. A local group, backed by far right organizations, pressured the schools to remove an eighth grade sexuality education program and the district's HIV/AIDS curriculum. The group lobbied the district to replace both with *Sex Respect* or *Teen-Aid*.

One of the targeted programs, *Values and Choices*, is a widely acclaimed values-based sexuality education program for the seventh and eighth grades. The curriculum advocates sexual abstinence, encourages communication, involves parents, and gives teenagers

important information about sexuality, birth control, HIV/AIDS and other STDs, and the risks of early pregnancy. Objectors were upset that the *Values and Choices* program was taught in a co-ed environment, felt that the program encourages masturbation, and said that it fails to adequately stress abstinence and teach "absolutes." One objector said the program's "main message about homosexuality is to give homosexuals equal rights without any mention of the dangers of homosexual behavior, like AIDS."⁴

Similar objections were heard about the district's HIV/AIDS curriculum. As a result of the curriculum, one objector complained, "these children can potentially be hypersexualized and eroticized."¹ Objectors argued that "...the teaching in the AIDS curriculum that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle is to be condemned"¹ and that "it is amazing and shocking that this blatant propagandizing for the homosexual lobby has gained such a beachhead in our public schools."¹ They charged that the HIV/AIDS curriculum promotes "deviant behavior" and "becomes for young minds academically sanctioned pornography."⁴

The uproar was inflamed by a speech to the community made by William R. Coulson, a California-based activist who travels the country crusading against sexuality education and drug abuse prevention programs. Coulson's speech was sponsored by the Minnesota Berean League, the state's largest far right organization. During the attack, the Anoka group had been circulating the Berean League literature, including its *Values in Education* pamphlet, throughout the community. And in a monthly newsletter, the League lauded the efforts of the Anoka objectors and criticized the challenged programs, specifically the *Values and Choices* curriculum. "Students are expected to make value choices without moral teaching...Absolutes are not being taught...Teenagers are encouraged to trust their own feelings — feelings that even teens themselves admit change every day."⁵ Ironically, *Values and Choices* is known for its values-based approach,

group organized parents of incoming high school freshman to boycott the health course that uses the book.

- In LOWER CAPE MAY, NEW JERSEY, objectors challenged the use of the textbook *Life and Health* in a 12th grade health class for discussing homosexuality. In response, a district review committee voted to remove the text, replace it with another, and adopt the abstinence-only curriculum *Sex Respect* as a resource for students whose parents oppose other comprehensive sexuality education curricula.
- In ASPERMONT, TEXAS, parents objected to a health and sexuality education video series used in grades 4 through 12 because it discussed sexually-transmitted-disease prevention and human development. In spite of widespread support for the program and an opt-out provision for parents who did not want their children in the class, the district discontinued the program.
- In ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA, parents filed a suit against the county school system for using a *Family Life*

Education curriculum in grades seven through ten because it contains "illegal and harmful material." Said one objector, "I really don't think the schools have a right to put in their schools instruction that avoids stressing moral standards."¹ The case is now pending in litigation.

- In EL CAJON, CALIFORNIA, parents, supported by national far right activist William Coulson, challenged *Values and Choices*, a sexuality education curriculum that was being piloted for use in the eighth grade, for showing nudity, and mentioning masturbation and homosexuality.
- In HUMBLE, TEXAS, parents and a local minister challenged *Developing Responsible Relationships*, supplemental material in the seventh grade sexuality education curriculum, on the grounds that it allegedly gives more emphasis to safer sex than to abstinence, sanctions "the homosexual lifestyle" without linking it

(Continued on page 16)

emphasizing "equality, self-control, responsibility, respect and honesty."⁶

A local group filed a formal complaint with the district, requesting removal of both programs and replacement with either of two abstinence-only curricula, *Sex Respect* or *Teen-Aid*. In addition, they employed scare tactics that parallel those of censorship campaigns around the country. They used half-truths and exaggerations about the programs to stir up parents in the community, placed flyers on the windshields of cars parked in church and shopping center parking lots, and mobilized hundreds of parents to jam a school board meeting and demand that the district switch the curricula to abstinence-only education.

In response to the demands, the Anoka School Board reconvened the district's Health Education Committee to review the challenged programs once again and allowed two objectors to become members. In the end, the committee withstood the pressure, recommending that both programs be retained. The School Board upheld the recommendation. After the decision, one member of the committee said he was persuaded by the substantial research and data proponents provided in support of the use and approaches of both the HIV/AIDS and *Values and Choices* curricula. By contrast, he noted, the objectors "have nothing but gut feelings and church letters."¹

The measured response of the Anoka School Board makes the incident a success story, but the intensity and breadth of the attack on Anoka programs tell a tale of horror that has befallen school systems around the country. And as censors improve their tactics and increase their numbers, decisions in favor of challenged programs may soon become the exception. As attacks like the Anoka incident spread from community to community — as nearby far right groups share information and tactics and state and national organizations orchestrate from afar — so does word of their devastating effect on communities and their schools. This has led some advocates and educators to brace

themselves. But more often, it leaves school board members and educators wary of a disruptive battle, and much more likely to capitulate to requests to remove or restrict materials.

The Far Right's New Strategy: Abstinence-Only

Enter into this mix a new and toxic ingredient — a tactic used by both the Anoka challengers and far right censors nationwide — proposing narrow, abstinence-only curricula in the place of more comprehensive sexuality education programs. The gambit makes far right groups doubly dangerous. First, they try to censor a complete treatment of sexuality education out of the schools. Then they propose their own brand of narrow sexuality education — in which all controversial themes have been, in effect, pre-censored.

The *Sex Respect* curriculum has already been adopted in 1,600 school systems nationwide.⁷ And *Teen-Aid* and *Sex Respect* are being pushed in many more communities. Apparently, some districts that adopted these curricula were unaware of their educational shortcomings and ideological bent. Others may have adopted the curricula to defuse controversies sparked by local far right groups opposed to more thorough and balanced materials.

These adoptions have not occurred by chance. For many years, Phyllis Schlafly's ally Kathleen Sullivan has led a systematic effort to convince state legislatures to mandate abstinence-only approaches, and has organized activists at the grassroots to pressure local school districts to adopt *Sex Respect*. Since 1985, the ultra-conservative, anti-choice Illinois Committee on the Status of Women, headed by Sullivan, has received \$1.7 million in state and federal funds to promote *Sex Respect*.⁸ Schlafly and Sullivan have inspired other far right groups, including Concerned Women for America, Focus on the Family, and Citizens for Excellence in Education, to copy their successes around the country. Preying on the reluctance of administrators to engage in protracted book battles, the abstinence-only move-

SAMPLE INCIDENTS

(Continued from page 15)

to HIV/AIDS, and lists abortion as a form of birth control. In response, a district-appointed review committee voted to remove the material and the Superintendent upheld its decision.

- In PLYMOUTH, CONNECTICUT, a group of parents raised objections during a board meeting to the sexuality education and human development segment, based partially on *The Great Body Shop* curriculum, of a Health/Lifeskills class in use in grades 6 through 8. The curriculum was criticized for being co-ed, being too explicit, using slang, and discussing "abnormal" sexual activity (homosexuality and masturbation). "Coed sex education shreds (sic) young girls of their natural modesty," said one objector. "There's a natural barrier, a natural uneasiness between the sexes which helps support morality. Coeducational sex education has a way of breeding immorality."⁴ Responding to the outcry at the meeting, the board voted to discontinue the two controversial sections of the class pending further review. Despite parental information sessions on the curriculum which had been held from 1986-88 when the curriculum was implemented, an ad hoc committee was formed to review the material once again. The board upheld the committee recommendation to use the abstinence-only *Teen-Aid* in place of the challenged curriculum.
- In KATY, TEXAS, parents and community members, with support from objectors in Humble, also challenged *Developing Responsible Relationships*, supplemental material in the seventh grade sexuality education curriculum, for the same reasons. Although a district-appointed review committee recommended that the district retain the material, the Superintendent overturned the review committee's decision, saying, "It's not totally bad, but with all the publicity, I do not want to consider it."¹

ment has enjoyed considerable success.

The abstinence-only strategy has helped far right groups in their efforts to remove mainstream and comprehensive sexuality education curricula. Most school districts around the country are committed to providing some kind of sexuality education; many are under state mandates to do so. Groups that once would simply have opposed any sexuality education — an untenable proposition for school districts usually committed and often mandated to provide sexuality education — are now able to offer their own narrow and incomplete brand of sexuality education, and to present it as a “compromise.” Anxious to avoid further skirmishes with the far right, school boards are taking the path of least resistance.

Sex Respect, Teen-Aid, and the Freedom To Learn

In eliminating the discussion of birth control, HIV/AIDS, abortion, and other controversial topics from sexuality education, programs such as *Sex Respect* and *Teen-Aid* appear to prefer ignorance to information. But the broad movement to inject these curricula into the schools poses an even greater threat to students' freedom to learn.

A chief purpose of schooling must be to teach children how to reason, to question, and to accept responsibility — *how* to think, more than *what* to think. The mission of the abstinence-only movement, however, is quite the opposite. Rather than encourage young people to learn to communicate, reason, and make responsible choices for themselves in the area of sexuality, *Sex Respect* and *Teen-Aid* aim to force-feed students simple answers to complicated questions. The curricula try to shield students from the world they live in, scare them rather than convince them, and fail to equip them with the full knowledge and self-reliance they need to negotiate the pressures of adolescence. In short, these programs fail to develop students' capacity to make critical decisions where it is the most crucial.

Abstinence-only supporters want to impose a single, narrow view upon all students, presenting the broad spectrum of human sexuality in simple, either-or, moralistic terms. But public education has an obligation to present a wide variety of ideas that reflect the perspectives of the entire community and address the needs of all students. For some young people, preaching abstinence might work. For many others, it will not. They will become the victims of an ideologically distorted curriculum.

Abstinence-only advocates justify their efforts as protecting the “rights of families,” but their formulation leaves out many families in our pluralistic society. A free exchange of ideas in the classroom and the complete and accurate presentation of issues ensure that schools do not impose one particular viewpoint on students, thereby preserving the rights of parents to transmit their own values to their children. The latter approach *respects* the interests of *all* families rather than *denying* the interests of *many* families by sanctioning only one view in the public schools. Moreover, almost every school district permits a parent to remove his or her child from certain activities or lessons. Such “opt-out” provisions further protect the interests of parents to retain control over the education of their children.

When far right organizations try to remove comprehensive sexuality education and then put abstinence-only curricula in its place, they are twice guilty of censorship. First, they try to eliminate comprehensive sexuality education in the public schools that does not conform to their narrow, sectarian standards. Second, they introduce abstinence-only materials that are, in a sense, pre-censored — thus, in effect, they attempt to remove critical segments of sexuality education before the materials reach the classroom.

According to many reviewers, the curricula fail to include anything but the most cursory treatment of such important issues as contraception, HIV/AIDS prevention, and homosexuality.^{9,10} And if children are

- In NEWPORT-MESA, CALIFORNIA, a group of citizens, using materials from Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum and Dr. Robert Simonds' Citizens for Excellence in Education, reviewed the nearly 90 video materials available in the district and submitted a list of eight titles they wanted removed and replaced. Among the charges the group leveled at the videos: the materials promoted safer sex instead of abstinence, validated homosexuality, did not present negative side of abortion, encouraged talking with friends in order to separate from parents, promoted psychosocially confusing and sadistic thoughts, degraded the family structure, and did not mention the unlawfulness of sexual intercourse with a minor out of wedlock.
- In KERN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, a group of parents at a school board meeting objected to a seventh grade sexuality education class for allegedly promoting promiscuity, discussing anatomy, teaching abstinence as a choice instead of a goal, and being co-ed. Some parents urged to adopt the abstinence-only curriculum *Sex Respect* in its place.

- And in school districts throughout the STATE OF MICHIGAN, a number of far right groups led attacks on the Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education, a state-sponsored health program that covers a range of topics including nutrition, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS prevention, and sexuality education. Outside groups such as the American Family Association, Rutherford Institute, DADS Foundation, and Eagle Forum inflamed controversy in all of these battles. Challengers contended the HIV/AIDS and sexuality segments of the program did not promote abstinence and offended community standards of decency.

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2. Vail, T. Couple seek ban, call text sex manual. *Quincy Patriot-Ledger*, October 4, 1990
3. Reported in the *Boston Globe*, January 10, 1991.
4. Miller, R. Parents persuade board to delay sex education. *Waterbury Republican-American*, November 29, 1990.

WHAT THE CENSORS ARE SAYING

KATHLEEN SULLIVAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ILLINOIS COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN:

"AIDS education money is going to be flooding every state, and right now I'm not sure what your state intends to do with it, but in Illinois it was very vague, so we have to start asking 'where is it going?', and certainly you want it to go to abstinence education, don't you?"

— *from a speech given at the 4th National Concerned Women for America Convention, Washington, DC, September 24-27, 1987.*

Blacks "are not going to learn to punch the time clock and to be on time and produce a day's work if they can't even control their own emotions in the important area of sexuality."

— *'Just say no' program says 'Yes' to public funds, article by ML Whetstone, Chicago Reporter, January 1992.*

BEVERLY LAHAYE, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF CONCERNED WOMEN FOR AMERICA:

"One of the most devastating enemies of the family is radical sex education in the public school. It is more explicit than is necessary for the good of the child. Too much sex education too soon causes undue curiosity and obsession with sex." — *Concerned Women for America (newsletter), April, 1981, 3(2).*

"Planned Parenthood is the ultra-liberal lobbying organization whose major goals are to promote wide scale abortions and distribute birth control items among young people, without their parents' knowledge and/or approval."

— *1990 direct mail piece that begins, "MAY I HAVE PERMISSION TO USE YOUR NAME?"*

JAMES C. DOBSON, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF FOCUS ON THE FAMILY:

"Are you really willing to submit your children...to be reprogrammed...Sex education becomes the vehicle for a redesign, a reprogramming of modern man." — *Focus on the Family radio show, broadcast November 6, 1990.*

PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE EAGLE FORUM:

"It is very healthy for a young girl to be deterred from promiscuity by fear of contracting a painful, incurable disease, or cervical cancer, or sterility, or the likelihood of giving birth to a dead, blind, or brain-damaged baby (even ten years later when she may be happily married)."

— *Phyllis Schlafly Report, February 1981, 14(1).*

"Schools ought to teach that the consequences of sex fall twice as heavily on girls as on boys...little girls ought to be taught about the terrible price that girls pay in terms of the side effects of contraceptives, of abortion and its trauma, venereal diseases, the poverty, the cervical cancer, the emotional and psychological trauma." — *Phyllis Schlafly Report, October 1989, 23(3).*

"The facts of life can be told in 15 minutes."

— *reported in the Hackensack, New Jersey Record, June 9, 1981.*

DR. ROBERT SIMONDS, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS, CITIZENS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION:

"When we get an active Christian parents' committee in operation in all districts, we can take complete control of all local school boards. This would allow us to determine all local policy, select good textbooks, good curriculum programs, superintendents and principals. Our time has come!" — *Group's goal: To reshape schools, article by DI Bednark, Milwaukee Journal, August 10, 1986.*

"... please keep praying for our CEE chapters who are fighting Planned Parenthood's despicable materials and pornographic demonstrations in junior high and high school classes."

— *President's report, NACE/CEE, July 1, 1991.*

"Sex Respect is one of the sex education 'abstinence' programs that CEE has been getting into schools across our nation. It is a fine program — admired by all (except, of course, the ACLU)."

— *President's report, NACE/CEE, July 1, 1991.*

made to abstain from sex, the abstinence-only argument goes, they do not need any information on birth control or STDs. But for those students who are sexually active, not knowing how to avoid pregnancy or HIV/AIDS could be deadly. In no other area in public education is the right of young people to get all the facts so critical. Preventing teenage pregnancy, STDs, and other consequences of adolescent sexual activity are important goals. Ignoring and censoring these issues neither solves the problem nor encourages healthful habits.

Just as troubling, much of the information in *Teen-Aid* and *Sex Respect* is simply inaccurate, according to many experts. Critiques, including Planned Parenthood internal memoranda, have noted that *Sex Respect* and *Teen-Aid* are laden with inaccuracies and misrepresentations about everything from changes in a woman's body during adolescence and sexual intercourse to sexual abuse and rape.¹¹ Pat Socia, a *Sex Respect* trainer (employed by the Illinois Committee on the Status of Women), even suggested that if you tell students it is possible to acquire AIDS by "deep kissing" — "no one knows for sure," she says — they may "choose to avoid the dangers of dating."¹²

Editor's Note: A complete analysis on the educational limitations of these curricula is beyond the scope of this article. Readers are encouraged to seek out comprehensive reviews.¹³

Conclusion

The censorship efforts of the far right reflect a hostility to the diversity of American society. In much of the far right activity People For the American Way monitors — in the schools, the arts, and television — we see efforts to impose a sectarian-based homogeneity on our culture. We find in their attack on sexuality education a preference for schools that narrowly enforce parental and scriptural authority by teaching simple right and wrong answers to complex questions; by condemning, rather than understanding and accepting, those who behave differently; and by instilling in children an unquestioning acceptance of received wisdom, rather than a sense of curiosity and wonder.

Thus the threat this movement poses to public education goes far beyond sexuality education, or any other area of the curriculum. Their threat is to the freedom to explore ideas, to challenge conventional thinking, and, at its core, to pursue knowledge about the world we live in. In short, the censors threaten the freedom to learn.

People For the American Way is a non-partisan constitutional liberties organization focusing on First Amendment issues. Mark Sedway is coordinator of PFAW's Freedom to Learn Project, which monitors school censorship and helps communities respond. Special thanks to research intern Kanani Kauka for her contributions to this article.

PFAW has a toll-free school censorship hotline. Call 800/326-PFAW to report challenges to sexuality education programs. For a copy of Attacks on the Freedom to Learn, send \$8.95 to: People For the American Way, 2000 M Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC, 20036.

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12. *Sex Respect* tells teens to 'Pet dogs, not dates.' *In These Times*, March 21-27, 1990.
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SIECUS has begun a major project to address the *fear-based* abstinence-only education approaches discussed in this article. We have identified 15 *fear-based* curricula and more than 50 communities that are currently embroiled in this debate. More details will appear in the next *SIECUS Report*. If you are experiencing any controversy surrounding the development and/or implementation of sexuality education in your community, please notify SIECUS, 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 2500, New York, NY 10036, 212/819-9770, fax 212/819-9776.

NEW THREAT TO SEXUAL EXPRESSSION

The Pornography Victims' Compensation Act

Carole S. Vance, PhD, MPH

Associate Research Scientist
Columbia University School of Public Health

The Senate Judiciary Committee is currently considering a bill that would radically attack sexually explicit speech as a way of controlling violence against women. An innovative and ambitious assault on the First Amendment, the so-called Pornography Victims' Compensation Act (S. 1521) would permit suits for economic damages against the producers, distributors, and exhibitors of material alleged to be obscene, if the plaintiff can show that her/his experience of rape or assault was "foreseeably caused, in substantial part" by her/his assailant's exposure to sexually explicit books, movies, videos, magazines or art.

Despite the lack of any accepted scientific evidence showing a causal link between the large and diverse body of sexually explicit books or images and violent crime, supporters of the bill rely on a melange of anecdote, highly selected research findings — usually overstated and taken out of context, and "expert" opinion (for example, a police officer might testify: "When we arrested the perpetrator, he was found to have porno magazines in his house,") to claim that sexually explicit texts and images are dangerous. Thus, they argue, producers and distributors should be liable for sex crimes. The legislation is also known as the "Bundy bill" from the pre-execution confession of serial murderer Ted Bundy. Befriended while in jail by James Dobson (head of the fundamentalist broadcasting syndicate, Focus on the Family, and Meese Commission member), Bundy became "born-again" and "confessed" that pornography caused his crimes against women.

The bill is an extreme departure from accepted constitutional principles in many respects. It authorizes civil suits, not against those who commit criminal and violent acts, but against producers and distributors of works alleged to have influenced these acts. The bill shifts responsibility for sex crimes from the perpetrator to third parties in a manner we would find improper and ludicrous for any non-sexual crime. Imagine a Senate bill that would hold the producers of *Bonnie and Clyde* responsible for bank robberies allegedly influenced by the film, or the publishers of *Das Kapital* liable for strike-related violence. That this bill could seem even momentarily plausible to the Senate Judiciary Committee suggests something about the excep-

tional and demonized status of sexuality and sexual speech in our culture.

Indeed, the bill is a continuation of the moral conservative and fundamentalist attacks on a wide range of sexually explicit material, which have accelerated since the Meese Commission report in 1986 and reached new levels of success since the attack on the National Endowment of the Arts began in 1989. Sponsor Senator Mitch McConnell first drafted the bill to permit damage suits against all sexually explicit material, including images and texts clearly protected by the First Amendment. In response to vigorous objection from media and civil liberties groups, he amended the bill to permit suits only against material which would be found obscene (or would constitute child pornography), arguing that First Amendment objections had thus been satisfied. Such material was already outside constitutional protection, so what harm could there be in authorizing civil suits against producers and distributors of such material?

Plenty. Aside from the bill's initial flaw — holding those who express or disseminate ideas responsible for acts committed by criminals allegedly exposed to these ideas — this legislation is a procedural morass. Because it provides for a civil suit rather than a criminal prosecution, the burden of proof is considerably weaker, making it easy for the plaintiff to win the case. In an obscenity trial, for example, the material must be proven obscene "beyond a reasonable doubt," while this civil action would require proof only by "a preponderance of the evidence."

In addition, this bill does not require a separate or prior determination that the sexually explicit material is obscene. Instead, the judge (or jury) will determine during the same procedure whether 1) the plaintiff was a victim of a sex crime; 2) the material is obscene; 3) the material was a substantial cause for the offense; and 4) the defendant should have reasonably foreseen that such material would create an unreasonable risk. Many legal observers believe that the complex and difficult evaluation required to determine if material is obscene (according to the three criteria provided by the Supreme Court in *Miller v. California*, 1973) will be truncated, even hopelessly poisoned in a courtroom where these other judgements must simultaneously be

made. The natural sympathy elicited by a victim of rape or other sexual assault may bias the court, leading to findings of obscenity against material which would otherwise be found non-obscene. This, coupled with the lower standard of proof, seriously stacks the proceedings against producers and distributors of sexually explicit material.

Finally, there is no requirement that the act of sexual violence in question has been prosecuted, proven or even reported! Thus, it is entirely possible that producers or distributors of sexually explicit material will be found liable for rape, while the actual rapist is not. The bill's language attempts to obscure this detail by repetitively using words such as "sexual offense," "sexual offender," and "victim of sex crime," utilizing a rhetorical sleight-of-hand much favored by moral conservatives.

"Conservative senators have merely discovered, as did the Meese Commission a few years before, that the traditional anti-obscenity agenda of the right wing can be made more appealing to a mainstream public by exchanging their usual rhetoric of immorality, lust, and sin for new language of violence against women."

The paradoxical and ill-considered details of this legislation give us a clue to its true motive. The bill's supporters are more interested in attacking and curtailing sexually explicit material than in stopping sexual violence against women. Conservative senators have merely discovered, as did the Meese Commission a few years before, that the traditional anti-obscenity agenda of the right wing can be made more appealing to a mainstream public by exchanging their usual rhetoric of immorality, lust, and sin for new language of violence against women. The legislative records of conservative Republicans, such as cosponsors Senators Strom Thurmond (R-SC), Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Charles Grassley (R-IA), show minimal support for initiatives that empower women or attack inequality. Their interest in women's victimization is piqued, it seems, only when female "victims of pornography" can be used as a rationale to curtail sexually explicit speech. For these and other reasons, the bill has been opposed by a number of feminist groups and leaders, for example, the Feminist Anti-Censorship Taskforce (FACT), the National Organization of Women (NOW) chapters in New York state and California, SIECUS, Adrienne Rich, Betty Friedan, and an ad hoc committee, Feminists for Free Expression. Although all share criticisms of pornography and oppose sexual violence, they are not persuaded that attacks on sexual expression are effective substitutes for attacks on sexism and sexual aggression.

These attacks are very much in keeping with new strategies developed in the post-Meese Commission era. Implementation of the Commission's recommenda-

tions have lead to increased obscenity prosecutions nationwide. The Justice Department, however, has also perfected a strategy of legal harassment, which has succeeded in removing sexually explicit material prior to obscenity conviction. The Justice Department works with local prosecutors to bring multiple suits against the same producer simultaneously in many conservative, usually rural localities, thereby maximizing the likelihood of conviction. The targeted producer is then threatened with the application of RICO provisions (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization statutes, developed to combat organized crime); under RICO, two or more convictions would demonstrate a "conspiracy" to commit obscenity and justify the application of even more draconian penalties. Faced with multiple and coordinated suits, producers agree to voluntarily leave the business, and the Justice Department achieves its objective of eliminating sexually explicit material without ever going to trial.

The central feature of the bill, beyond its hare-brained theories of causality and displaced responsibility, is its potential for harassment. Legal observers may question whether, in fact, it will be possible to ever "prove" that an idea caused a sexual crime, but that is not the point. For even if these civil suits do not succeed in the end, the ability of members of conservative groups to bring an endless series of suits, targeting producers and materials they do not like, poses an enormous threat. The financial and emotional expenditures required in such defenses are enormous, and for all but the largest producers and distributors, potentially bankrupting. The fact that the alleged crime need not be reported or prosecuted opens the gates to harassment very wide. Opponents of the bill have commented on its potentially chilling effect, that is, that producers and distributors will restrict constitutionally protected expression, for fear of suit. The true objective of this bill, I fear, is even more ominous: to give moral conservative groups the tools to financially cripple makers of sexually explicit material and drive them out of the market entirely.

In addition, moral conservatives have increasingly pioneered extra-legal ways to attack the much larger body of sexually explicit images and words which would never be found obscene in any court. In doing so, they have attempted to put into general circulation the rhetorical equation they have devised in their own circles for the past 15 years: any description or depiction of disapproved sexuality — sexuality education, birth control, homosexuality, and safer sex — is "obscene."

Although its preamble suggests that it is aimed at "hardcore pornographic material," the bill permits suits to be brought against material merely alleged to be obscene. Coupled with weak standards of evidence and a prejudicial environment, the bill thus provides a new arena in which moral conservative groups can ply their rhetorical alchemy, arguing, as they sincerely believe, that a large class of sexually explicit materials cause harm, even violence. Sexuality educators, sexologists, and HIV/AIDS educators should not be surprised to be the targets of their attacks.

SIECUS Fact Sheet #2

On Comprehensive Sexuality Education

THE NATIONAL COALITION TO SUPPORT SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education is committed to the mission of assuring that comprehensive sexuality education is provided for all children and youth in the United States by the year 2000.

The National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education (NCSSE) consists of over 50 national non-profit organizations, many of which are noted role models and initiators in promoting the health, education and social concerns for our nation's youth. These organizations represent a broad constituency of social workers, teachers, church leaders, advocates, physicians and other health care professionals, and child development specialists which, combined, reach the needs of more than 20 million young people.

The goals of the National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education are as follows:

- To advocate for sexuality education at the national and state level
- To assist national organizations concerned with youth to have policies and programs on sexuality education by the year 2000
- To develop strategies for facilitating national and local implementation of sexuality education initiatives and efforts
- To develop pro-active strategies to address the activities of those who oppose providing children with comprehensive sexuality education
- To provide an opportunity for networking, resources sharing, and collaboration on a national level
- To develop joint goals and objectives for the 1990s
- To hold semi-annual meetings to discuss progress made toward achieving its mission

Sexuality education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values about identity, relationships, and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image, and gender roles. Sexuality education seeks to assist children in understanding a positive view of sexuality, provide them with information and skills about taking care of their sexual health, and help them acquire skills to make decisions now and in the future.

Sexuality education programs should emphasize that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of life. School-based education programs are most successful in a balanced curriculum that provides factual information, opportunities to examine values and attitudes, preparation for adult roles and relationships, as well as skills for adopting health-promoting sexual behaviors. In order for such sexuality education programs for adolescents to be inclusive, they need to address both sexual abstinence and safer sexual behaviors. Ideally, programs would be offered from kindergarten through 12th grade in the context of an overall comprehensive health education program.

Comprehensive sexuality education underscores and supplements the role of parents in the sexuality education of their children and reinforces the notion that responsibility and obligation for sexuality education must be a shared on a community-wide basis.

For more information about NCSSE, contact: SIECUS, 130 West 42nd Street, Suite 2500, New York, NY 10036, 212/819-9770, fax 212/819-9776.

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COALITION TO SUPPORT SEXUALITY EDUCATION

American Association for Counseling and Development
American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
American Association of School Administrators
American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Home Economics Association
American Medical Association
American Nurses Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American School Health Association
American Social Health Association
Association for the Advancement of Health Education
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Association of State and Territorial Directors of Public Health Education
Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation
B'nai B'rith Women
Catholics for a Free Choice
Center for Population Options
Child Welfare League of America
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition on Sexuality and Disability, Inc.
Commission on Family Ministries and Human Sexuality, National Council of the Churches
ETR Associates
Girls, Inc.
Hetrick-Martin Institute for Gay and Lesbian Youth
The Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality Alumni Association
Midwest School Social Work Council
National Abortion Rights Action League
National Association of Counties
National Coalition of Advocates for Students
National Council on Family Relations
National Council of State Consultants for School Social Work Services
National Education Association Health Information Network
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National League for Nursing
National Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation
National Mental Health Association
National Network of Runaway and Youth Services
National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting
National Resource Center for Youth Services
National School Boards Association
National Urban League
Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.
Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S.
Society for Adolescent Medicine
Society for Behavioral Pediatrics
Society for Public Health Education, Inc.
Society for the Scientific Study of Sex
The Alan Guttmacher Institute
Unitarian Universalist Association
United Church Board for Homeland Ministries
United States Conference of Local Health Officers
United States Conference of Mayors
University of Pennsylvania
YWCA of the U.S.A.

•BOOKS•BOOKS•BOOKS•BOOKS•BOOKS•

KINSEY, SEX AND FRAUD: THE INDOCTRINATION OF A PEOPLE **An Investigation into the Human Sexuality Research of Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard**

Dr. Judith A. Reisman & Edward W. Eichel, authors

Dr. J. Gordon Nuir & Dr. John H. Court, editors

Lafayette, LA: Huntington House Publishers, 1990, 246 pp., \$19.95.

Should poorly researched and inadequately edited books be reviewed in the *SIECUS Report*? The answer, in the case of this book, is yes, because in spite of all these faults, its premise has come to be believed by some sections of the reading public. The authors and editors of *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud* allege that the United States is in a state of rapid decline, and that, in general, morality in America is reaching a new low. This in their minds is all due to Alfred Kinsey. Their purpose in writing this book is not only to undermine Kinsey's research, but to demonstrate that Kinsey himself was an immoral, irreligious person, anxious to normalize the unthinkable, i.e. homosexuality, adultery, and adult-child sex.

Reisman et al attempt a smear job based on inadequate evidence and invented data. An example of this occurs in a quotation on page 8, taken from Paul Robinson's *The Modernization of Sex*, in which Robinson is correctly quoted as stating that Kinsey's work was "informed by a set of values and intellectual preferences," but then the quotation continues as follows (reviewer's brackets): "...in undermining established categories of sexual wisdom...Kinsey assigned [prominence] to masturbation and homosexuality, both of which were objects of his partiality....[He had a] tendency to conceive of the ideal sexual universe according to a homoerotic model." This quotation required the merging of sentences from pages 54, 64, and 71, and creates a total distortion of the actual meaning the text.

On page 64, Robinson says that

Kinsey regarded heterosexual coitus as the most important aspect of human sexual behavior and that intercourse remained the standard by which he judged most other forms of sexual expression: "At the same time, heterosexual intercourse suffered a relative eclipse simply because the prominence Kinsey assigned to masturbation and homosexuality, both of which were objects of his partiality."

On page 70, Robinson says that Kinsey was convinced that the sexual capacity of men was considerably greater than that of women and that his quantitative procedures led him to imply that the mathematics of sexual life were more conducive to homosexuality than to heterosexuality; moreover, Kinsey was somewhat surprised to find out that this was not the case. Whether or not one agrees with Robinson's interpretation, and I do not entirely, it is clear that what he says is quite different from what he is quoted by Reisman et al as saying. Everything is grist for their attack on the enemy they perceive to be embodied in Kinsey.

For example, Kinsey's statistical methods are attacked by Reisman et al, who treat their criticism like new material — even though this point has been a basic criticism of the Kinsey reports since they were first issued. Kinsey's reliance on volunteers (usually in groups) was questioned long before the reports were published, however, this method was adopted anyway because the critics — who were brought in to suggest better methods — felt that randomly chosen subjects would refuse to answer questions about sex. I believe that Kinsey's *total sample method*, as he called it, was not particularly accurate and that those who use Kinsey's data as the final word are incorrect. However, Kinsey indicated how he obtained his statistics and was careful to report only what his sample responded. He cannot be held responsible for the misuse of his data. The best example of this misuse is the distortion of Kinsey's work in *Kinsey, Sex and Fraud*.

After obtaining his data, Kinsey classified the responses on a seven-

point bipolar scale according to sexual outlets, with exclusive heterosexuality as zero and exclusive homosexuality as six. In a sense, this scale was a stroke of genius because it allowed those readers with any kind of homosexual experience to believe that it was a part of a normal heterosexual pattern of growing up, while those who identified with being homosexual discovered that they were not alone. I do not believe that the seven-point bipolar scale is a good way of rating sexual activity, however it was a standard scale in use, and was considered good "science for the time." The important thing that Kinsey's research indicated was that homosexual activity was much more prevalent than American public opinion at the time was willing to admit. The extent of homosexual activity is still not clear; this is not due to Kinsey's research, but due to government unwillingness to financially support a more accurate study.

The accusation the authors and editors use most often to discredit Kinsey is that he experimented with children. Although the authors report that Kinsey relied upon adult informants for his childhood data, they argue that Kinsey would never have been satisfied with this data alone and that he carried out experiments himself, pointing out that Kinsey undertook experiments on subjects and actually filmed some of them. Both of these latter statements are true. For example, Kinsey tried to obtain some of the same kind of data that William Masters and Virginia Johnson later did, but comparable technology was not available at the time. He did film some mating patterns of animals, as well as adult human beings. From this, Reisman et al argue that Kinsey must have done experiments on children, yet they offer no evidence to support this. Kinsey states quite clearly that he received his data from those who had engaged in adult-child sex (most of them in prison at the time of the interview) and who had kept records about their contacts. Reisman et al indicate that he should have labeled his data sources

as perverts and not used their sample. This a serious ethical issue that warrants debate, but instead, they imply that Kinsey carried out sexual experiments on children for purposes of his research, and fail to present a valid argument.

Kinsey stated that sexual interactions between adults and children are not unusual in various animal species — not even among the human species in certain cultures (ancient Greece, for example, institutionalized sexual activities between adolescent boys and adult males). This statement outrages Reisman et al, although it is undoubtedly true. This does not mean, however, that society should change its attitudes and encourage sexual interplay between adults and minors, as Kinsey is accused of advocating. It does, however, give us guidelines for the treatment of children who are molested, emphasizing that, no matter how upset we as individuals might be in such situations, we can make them worse for the child by overreacting.

It is Kinsey's stance as a dispassionate scientist that most bothers the authors and editors of this book. They feel that sexual outlets are not the way sex should be measured and impose their own moral standards as the sole criteria. They attack sexuality professionals, with the exception of their adherents, for not condemning homosexuality, divorce, and HIV/AIDS, among other things. They even blame the HIV/AIDS epidemic on Kinsey, because he "unleashed" homosexuality upon society. The result of all this effort is a polemic that is not based upon fact. Reisman et al are not interested in any scientific study of sex, but they believe that sex should be examined only by those who feel as they do and that those who try to look at sex dispassionately are only following in the mistaken path blazed by Kinsey.

This viewpoint is not theirs alone, but represents the opinion of those who oppose sexuality education in the schools and elsewhere, who argue that the only answer to the problems of teenage pregnancy, STDs, and HIV infection, is to *just say no*. An unfortunate aspect of this book is that the two authors lay claim to being sexuality professionals. Reisman, who has a PhD in

communications from Case Western University, is president of the Institute for Media Education and was the only researcher given funding by the Meese Commission. Eichel is a psychotherapist in practice in New York City who has a master's degree in human sexuality from New York University. What they are not, however, is sexuality researchers. Instead they are committed polemicists who do not bother to let the facts interfere with their presentation.

Reviewed by Vern L. Bullough, PhD, RN, distinguished professor, SUNY College Buffalo.

SEX IN CHINA: Studies in Sexology in Chinese Culture

Fang Fu Ruan

New York: Plenum Press, 1991, 208 pp., \$32.50.

Dr. Ruan has written a superb, extremely engaging, and enjoyably readable introduction to 3,000 years of Chinese sexual attitudes and behaviors. Like several other recent studies of sexuality in mainland China, he discusses sexual values and customs in ancient China. Unlike others, he goes on to describe the full spectrum of sexual attitudes, customs, and behavior patterns in a vast nation that contains one-fourth of the world's population.

A physician, medical historian, and associate professor at the Beijing Medical University, Ruan was a leader in writing and lecturing on sexuality education and sexual issues in the People's Republic of China until he came to the United States in 1985. In recent years he has lectured on Chinese sexology at several American universities, adding to the dozens of books and hundreds of articles he has authored in both Chinese and English. He is currently on the faculty at The Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco, California.

A skilled and expert scholar, Ruan picks his material carefully from an incredibly rich garden of ancient and modern resources. He quickly makes the reader comfortable with a sharply focused appetizer of China's ancient medical and popular sexuality literature, a sketch of Chinese history, and a summary of studies of Chinese sex-

ology available in English. He then comments on the significance of ancient Chinese sexology for Western students of human sexuality.

In two absorbing and lucid, yet fast moving chapters, he deftly presents the essence of Chinese sexual philosophy, reviews sexual attitudes in Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist traditions, and outlines what is currently known about classic sex manuals and their preservation.

Too many popular writers who write on Taoist sexology like to use esoteric Taoist terminology to seduce their readers into an awe of ancient Chinese wisdom. Ruan is much too serious a scholar to indulge in this diversion. He guides his reader through the essence of Taoism in 20 pages, ending with comments on the relevance of Taoist techniques for Western sexology. Personally, I would have liked more reflection and evaluation of the Taoist techniques of sexual pleasure and its links with Tantric yoga, but readers interested in pursuing these subjects can refer to Vern Bullough's *Sexual Variance in Society and History*, Jolan Chang's *The Tao of Love and Sex*, Howard Levy and Akira Ishihara's *The Tao of Sex*, and other similar works.

Ruan traces the history of prostitution from acceptance to persecution, compares classical Chinese erotica, and outlines the history of homosexuality in China from the golden age of the early emperors to today's darker age. He also devotes a short chapter to the status and current situation of transsexuals and transvestites in China.

The concluding chapter of *Sex in China* is filled with a wealth of practical information. Beginning with the paradox of traditional Chinese conservatism in which official repression often conflicted with private permissiveness, Ruan goes on to describe current prescriptions of cohabitation and premarital sex, nudity and depictions of nudity, fashion, and social nightlife. He gives a capsule view of how the government devalues the marriage relationship by separating couples and repressing sexual information. Sexual crimes, rape, juvenile sexual delinquents, divorce, extra-marital sexual relations, and the hypocrisy of libertine government leaders are briefly described. Ruan ends

this fascinating and abundant repast by discussing the urgent need for sexuality education, the repression of sexuality education between 1949 and 1980, and the factors that brought about a new enlightenment in the 1980s. Readers will gain valuable insights into the future of sexual practices and relationships in China from Ruan's conclusions about the connection between human rights, the April Fifth (1976) Youth, and the demonstration of university students in Tiananmen Square in the winter of 1986-87.

Sex in China is highly recommended for sexologists, clinicians, family life educators, and anyone interested in a fascinating exploration of cultural, social, historical, and philosophical aspects of sexuality in China.

Reviewed by Robert T. Francoeur, PhD, professor of Biological & Allied Health Sciences, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, New Jersey.

VOX

Nicholson Baker
Random House, 1992, 165 pp., \$15.

Some novels shake up the erotic landscape and, as such, are important to sexuality educators, therapists, and to anyone else concerned with the sexual climate-of-the-times. In recent decades, I think of the novels *Fear of Flying* or *Portnoy's Complaint* as comparable examples. Now, a rather obscure novelist named Nicholson Baker has written a slim volume called *Vox* which its publisher calls "the most sexually provocative novel of our time." Maybe it is.

The entire 165 pages is one very long telephone conversation between a man and a woman who have connected via a sex-by-phone service for which each party pays to have an anonymous, sexy conversation. Their talk gathers erotic momentum as insistently as Ravel's *Bolero* until a crescendo, "Oh, Nnnnnnnnnnnn!, Nnn!, Nnn!, Nnn!, Nnn!, Nnn!" The words they exchange in the final preorgasmic minutes are wonderfully sexy and detailed. This makes for good erotica.

Does *Vox* have serious merit beyond its titillation rating? I think, in fact, that it does. It is a small tour-de-force, encapsulating a totally contem-

porary sexual experience. Never before in history could two people make this kind of sexual connection — complete strangers, 3,000 miles apart, exchanging vivid, incredibly intimate sexual fantasies and masturbating together to (simultaneous!) climaxes.

What distinguishes *Vox* from mere "pornography" or erotica and qualifies it as literature? Certainly not the plot, of which there is essentially none (apparently true of Baker's previous books, also). But *Vox* is an evocative and serious portrait of two people struggling to become psychologically close to one another, however briefly. They take more and more risks as the telephone call progresses. He tells her some of his pet names for body parts; breasts are "frans," "nans," or "Kleins" while a woman's ass is a "tock." Later on she weaves his word "tock" into the fantasy she is telling him. They have already developed a shared, secret, "dirty" vocabulary!

When she tells him the details of her masturbatory style, he says, "This is a miracle." And again, when she is self-revealing he says, "Oh, I love you, you tell me everything." Part of the publisher's promotion for *Vox* includes a toll-free number, in which the caller hears the statement, "The most erogenous zone may be the human ear."

Deborah Tannen, author of the best-selling book about male-female talk, *You Just Don't Understand*, came to a similar conclusion: "We all want, above all, to be heard — but not merely to be heard. We want to be understood..."

Alice Walker, discussing her novel, *The Temple of My Familiar*, said that a woman in the novel falls in love with a man because she sees him as "a giant ear."

Baker gives us the reverse angle — the ear, yearning to have sexual intimacies poured in. Both characters gently press one another to go beyond the comfort zone into the secret territory we rarely if ever confide in anyone. When the man (his name is Jim, we learn at the very end of the book) responds to her (Abby's) coaxing and describes his erection, he tells her it's a "thrill and terror." We can infer that it is a thrill because it is a terror.

Jim is also extremely interested in seeing sexual moments, and watching rented video tapes or real women masturbating. In fact, his fantasies are almost always about seeing women masturbate. He claims this "...isn't like simple voyeurism...it's holier or more reverent than that." His attitude, while a bit skewed from the norm, is in some ways praiseworthy. Women should rejoice in a man who can truly celebrate a woman's orgasm for its own sake — even when it does not occur with a man. Jim is not at all threatened by the knowledge that he is not sexually indispensable.

Vox offers some good laughs, which is an indispensable part of human sexuality. Abby tells Jim about her favorite ways of masturbating — all involving water — either the shower, the tub, a pool, any water at all. Jim responds, "God, car washes must have driven you wild." The entire novel has a sly, tongue-in-cheek tone. Baker manages to take sex very seriously and very lightly at the same time.

Reviewed by Lorna Sarrel, MSW, co-director, Human Sexuality Program, Yale University.



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Conference and Seminar Calendar

THE CUTTING EDGE 1992 CONFERENCE, "EROTIC MYSTERIES: INTIMACY, SEXUALITY AND GENDER IN THE 90s," April 11-12, 1992. Sponsored by the University of California San Diego, Department of Psychiatry and Psychiatry Education and Research Foundation. San Diego, California. Contact: The Cutting Edge Conference, PO Box 12088, La Jolla, CA 92039-2088.

NATIONAL ABORTION FEDERATION'S 16TH ANNUAL MEETING, "ABORTION: MORAL CHOICE AND MEDICAL IMPERATIVE," April 13-14, 1992; **Post Graduate Seminar,** April 12, 1992. Pan Pacific Hotel, Omni San Diego Hotel, San Diego, California. Contact: Kay Arndorfer, NAF, 1436 U Street NW, Suite 103, Washington, DC 20009, 202/667-5881, fax 202/667-5890.

CENTER FOR EARLY ADOLESCENCE ANNOUNCES 1992 TRAINING INSTITUTES. Training for Program Planners and Youth Workers, May 13-15, 1992 (Chapel Hill, NC), September 23-25 (Minneapolis, MN), November 11-13 (Chapel Hill, NC); **Training for Parent Educators,** July 8-10, 1992 (Chapel Hill, NC), July 29-31 (Minneapolis, MN), October 21-23 (San Francisco, CA). For professionals and volunteers working with 10 to 15 year olds and their families. Participants will learn to effectively use the Center's curricula in parent education and program planning. Contact: Center for Early Adolescence, School of Medicine, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, D-2 Carr Mill Town Center, Carrboro, NC 27510, 919/966-1148.

THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE REGARDING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE, May 27-30, 1992. Portland, Oregon. Contact: Kevin B. McGovern, PhD, Alternatives to Sexual Abuse, 1225 NW Murray Road, Suite 214, Portland, OR 97229, 503/644-6600.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SEX EDUCATORS, COUNSELORS AND THERAPISTS' (AASECT) XXIV ANNUAL CONFERENCE, "THE SPECTACULAR WORLD OF SEX," June 3-7, 1992. Will provide a forum for positive approaches to the delivery of sexual information and practices to individuals, families, and institutions in both the private and public sector. Buena Vista Palace, Orlando, Florida. Contact: Cynthia Larson AASECT, 435 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1717, Chicago, IL 60611-4067, 312/644-0828, fax 312/644-8557.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH 1992 PREVENTION CONFERENCE, "HEALTH CARE CHALLENGES OF THE 90s: HIV, ADDICTIONS & THE FAMILY," June 9-11, 1992. Will feature presenters from the offices of: Substance Abuse Prevention, Treatment Improvement, Minority Health, Centers for Disease Control, and Bureau of Maternal & Child Health. Meadowlands Hilton, Secaucus, New Jersey. Contact: Barry Hantman, New Jersey Department of Health, Division of Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Addiction Services, CN 362, Trenton, NJ 08625-0362, 609/984-6961.

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF SEX RESEARCH, July 7-11, 1992. Prague, Czechoslovakia. Contact: Kenneth J. Zucker, PhD, Secretary-Treasurer, International Academy of Sex Research, Child and Family Studies Centre, Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, 250 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5T 1R8, 416/979-2221, ext. 2271.

THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY (ISAP), "CURRENT CONFLICTS OF ADOLESCENCE," July 12-15, 1992. Cosponsored by the Society for Adolescent Medicine, The International Association for Adolescent Health, and The International Children's Centre of Paris. Will present a multidisciplinary approach to current adolescent health needs in three areas: Depression and School Failure, Psychosomatic and Chronic Illness, and Violence and Sexual Pathology. The Fairmont Hotel, Chicago, Illinois. Contact: ISAP Third International Congress, 2101 South Arlington Heights Road, Suite 150, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, 708/290-6313.

21ST ANNUAL THORNFIELD WORKSHOP ON SEXUALITY, "FEMALE AND MALE GENDER, ORIENTATION AND LIFESTYLES," July 6-12, 1992. Will focus on gender, orientation, and lifestyle in relation to social concepts of maleness and femaleness and will examine gender role and identity and their association with sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia. Format will include a 5-day SAR (Sexual Attitude Reassessment) and workshops on classroom strategies and techniques, AIDS update, incest and other abuse, the Bible and sexuality, male/female issues in sexual therapy, and sexuality and people with disabilities. Thornfield Conference Center, Cazenovia, New York. Contact: Alison McCain Deming, PO Box 447, Fayetteville, NY 13066, 315/637-8990.

"HEALING OUR SPIRIT WORLDWIDE," July 7-11, 1992. Will focus on concerns shared by indigenous communities worldwide such as HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual addiction, alcohol and drug treatment, urban wellness programs, and programs for youth by youth. Will feature cultural activities for all ages as part of this family celebration of sobriety and wellness. Edmonton, Alberta. Contact: The World Conference Office, Box 3884, Station D, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5L 4K1.

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR YOUTH SERVICES' SEVENTH ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE, "WORKING WITH AMERICA'S YOUTH," July 19-22, 1992. Cosponsored by National Network for Runaway and Youth Services. More than 50 workshops for youth-serving professionals will include: direct service topics such as abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, lesbian/gay youth, crisis intervention, and runaway and homeless youth; and management topics such as advocacy and lobbying, fundraising, program models, and inter-agency collaboration. Omni San Diego, San Diego, California. Contact: TeRessa Kaemmerling, NRC Coordinator, NRC Youth Services, 202 West 8th Street, Tulsa, OK 74119-1419, 918/585-2986.

FIFTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SEXUAL COMPULSIVITY/ADDICTION, October 4-6, 1992. Minneapolis, Minnesota. Contact: Patricia J. Morandi, Suite 107, Radisson Hotel Metrodome, 615 Washington Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414, 612/626-7766.

THE 1992 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF SEX (SSSS), November 12-15, 1992. A multidisciplinary conference for those who serve a diversity of children and their families. San Diego Hilton Beach and Tennis Resort, San Diego, California. Contact: Howard J. Ruppel, Jr., Executive Director, PO Box 208, Mount Vernon, IA 52314, 319/895-8407.