



### LOUISIANA

***The Governor's Program on Abstinence and community-based organizations in Louisiana received \$2,610,045 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.<sup>1</sup>***

#### **Louisiana Sexuality Education Law and Policy**

Louisiana does not require schools to offer sexuality or sexually transmitted disease (STD)/HIV education, but schools are permitted to offer it after sixth grade. State law mandates that sexuality education cannot be offered in kindergarten through sixth grade, except in Orleans Parish, which may offer sexuality education in the third grade and above. Schools must provide this education “regardless of the student’s grade level” if the student is parenting or pregnant.

Louisiana law defines sexuality education as:

[T]he dissemination of factual biological or pathological information that is related to the human reproduction system (sic) and may include the study of sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy, childbirth, puberty, menstruation, and menopause, as well as the dissemination of factual information about parental responsibilities under the child support laws of the state.

The education must be integrated into “an existing course study such as biology, science, physical hygiene, or physical education.” It cannot include “religious beliefs, practices in human sexuality, nor the subjective moral and ethical judgments of the instructor or other persons. Students shall not be tested, quizzed, or surveyed about their personal or family beliefs or practices in sex, morality, or religion.”

Classes may not include “any sexually explicit materials depicting male or female homosexual activity.” They also may not in “any way counsel or advocate abortion.” In addition, this education must emphasize that:

- abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage as the expected standard for all school-age children;
- abstinence from sexual activity is a way to avoid unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, including acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and other associated health problems; and
- each student has the power to control personal behavior and to encourage students to base action on reasoning, self-esteem, and respect for others.

Louisiana also requires that all public high schools that offer home economics classes must also provide “parenthood education,” which must include the topics of family living and community relationships, the consequences of the lack of adequate prenatal care, home management, and the responsibilities of parenthood.

In addition, Louisiana now requires adoption awareness be included in any health education or appropriate class. This includes instruction on “the benefits of adoption for families wishing to add a child, for potential adoptees, and for persons who are pregnant or who have a child for whom they are unable to care.”

According to the *Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators*, students must be taught “the principle modes by which communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, HIV infection, are spread and the best methods for the restriction and prevention of these diseases.”

Parents or guardians may remove their children from sexuality education and/or STD/HIV education classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Louisiana Revised Statutes 17:263, 17:279, 17:281, and *Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators-Bulletin 741*.

### **Recent Legislation**

#### *Bill Includes Adoption Awareness in Health Education*

Senate Bill 111, introduced in March 2006, requires the inclusion of adoption awareness in any health education or appropriate class. This means that instruction on “the benefits of adoption for families wishing to add a child, for potential adoptees, and for persons who are pregnant or who have a child for whom they are unable to care.” The bill passed in June 2006 and is now law.

### **Events of Note**

SIECUS is not aware of any recent events regarding sexuality education in Louisiana.

### **Louisiana’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note**

#### *New Orleans, Louisiana<sup>2</sup>*

- In 2005, 52% of female high school students and 74% of male high school students in New Orleans, Louisiana reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 5% of female high school students and 29% of male high school students in New Orleans, Louisiana reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 13% of female high school students and 47% of male high school students in New Orleans, Louisiana reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 39% of female high school students and 53% of male high school students in New Orleans, Louisiana reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.

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- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 74% of females and 85% of males in New Orleans, Louisiana reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 8% of females and 7% of males in New Orleans, Louisiana reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 11% of females and 21% of males in New Orleans, Louisiana reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, 79% of high school students in New Orleans, Louisiana reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

### **Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding**

The Governor's Program on Abstinence (GPA) in Louisiana received \$1,283,563 in federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2007. The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant requires states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The state match may be provided in part or in full by local groups. Louisiana's Abstinence Director, Gail Dignam, refused to provide SIECUS with information on the match amount or how it is made up. However, in several places on the GPA's website, the program is described as free to the state.<sup>3</sup> This implies the match is made through in-kind services.

In Louisiana, the GPA controls the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage dollars. This is the only abstinence-only-until-marriage program in the country run by the state's executive branch.<sup>4</sup> The program consists of several parts:

- Curriculum for seventh grade students developed by the GPA. Local school boards must approve the program.
- Teacher training across the state for both public and private schools.
- GPA Clubs in high schools which are designed to train young abstinent advocates and provide support for young people making the decision to remain abstinent.

Louisiana's GPA has been controversial since its inception, in part, for its reliance on blatantly religious messages. In 2002, the ACLU filed suit against the GPA claiming that it violated the constitutional separation of church and state by using federal and state abstinence-only-until-marriage funds to convey religious messages and advance religion. Later that year, the two parties reached a settlement. As part of the settlement, the GPA must review lessons and curricula prior to their use and must post a statement on its website and all promotional materials that reads:

The GPA is a health and education program committed to promoting and publicizing the benefits of abstinence. Under limits imposed by the Constitution, the GPA's funds may not be used for activities, events or materials that include religious messages or otherwise promote or advance religion.<sup>5</sup>

In a November 17, 2004 letter to the Louisiana Governor's Program on Abstinence (GPA), however, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) identified numerous violations this settlement.<sup>6</sup> For example, in a section entitled "Ask the Experts," a young woman asks how she should convince her friend to remain a virgin. The GPA's "expert" responds, "Tell your friend that abstaining from sex until entering a loving marriage will give her the freedom to achieve (sic) true self-esteem—to be really, truly, 'cool' in God's eyes as well as yours and mine."<sup>7</sup>

According to the ACLU's letter, the website also refers readers to scripture in linked articles and includes summaries of articles that advance religion. For example, an article by the American Life League is included in the website's "Library." The article states, "the condom's biggest flaw is that those using it to prevent the conception of another human being are offending God." It continues, "Furthermore, each and every act of marital intercourse must be both unitive (sic) and open to procreation. Any action, including condom use, which has as its purpose to render procreation impossible is intrinsically evil."<sup>8</sup>

Joe Cook, executive director of ACLU of Louisiana, explained at the time, "The GPA has not only failed to correct the error of its ways, but in the past two years it has gone out of its way to use taxpayer money to layer religious content on religious content. It is time for the GPA to be held accountable to the Constitution and to its own legal agreements. If it fails to do so, we'll see them in court for round two."<sup>9</sup>

In early December 2004, then-Governor Kathleen Blanco (D) rejected the ACLU's claims and said that the program is in compliance with the federal settlement. In a written statement she said, "I hope that the ACLU would agree that among the many voices in this debate are those whose deep faith in God prompts them to discuss this issue from a Biblical perspective. This is a perspective that I and most Louisiana citizens strongly share."<sup>10</sup>

Much of the information that the ACLU commented on in its 2004 letter remains up on the site including the advice suggesting that a young woman stays "'cool' in God's eyes."<sup>11</sup> Another letter of advice on the website shows the GPA's biases against abortion. In answer to the question, "Is abortion murder?" the GPA's website provides dictionary definitions of abortion, murder, embryo, and fetus. Though the site does acknowledge that abortion is not a crime in the United States, it implies that abortion does meet the criteria for murder because "According to the definitions, an embryo or fetus is a person because it is human and is an individual, never-to-be-repeated being."<sup>12</sup>

The GPA site also lists several individuals who are part of the GPA Speakers Bureau and available to Louisiana schools. One of these individuals, Pam Stenzel, is national abstinence-only-until-marriage speaker who travels to high schools around the country. SIECUS reviewed Stenzel's video "Sex Still Has a Price Tag," in which she delivers two 40-plus-minute monologues to a studio audience of high school students. She uses a preacher's cadence and often yells at her audience in attempts to emphasize her points. Stenzel focuses on unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and other negative outcomes of sex such as emotional pain and the inability to bond. Her presentation relies on fear, promotes shame, and mandates decisions for young people. For example, Stenzel tells her audience "If you forget everything else I told you today, and you can only remember one thing, this is what I want you to hear. If you have sex outside of one permanent monogamous—and monogamy does not mean one at a time—that means one partner who has only been with you—if you have sex outside of that context, you will pay."<sup>13</sup>

Another speaker listed as a resource is Dr. W. "Al" Krotoski. He is described as "a leader in the ban on partial birth abortions." According to the GPA, Dr. Krotoski is available to speak to students on the following topics: "Stem Cell Research, Cloning, Life in the Womb, and Partial Birth Abortion."<sup>14</sup>

### **Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees**

There are three CBAE grantees in Louisiana: The Church United for Community Development, Operation Turn Around, and Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc. There are no AFLA grantees in Louisiana.

The Church United for Community Development uses its CBAE funds to conduct an abstinence-only-until-marriage program in Donaldsonville in Ascension Parish and in the Melrose East area of Baton Rouge, and plans to expand to other communities.<sup>15</sup> The program “will offer 30 young people at each site the opportunity to participate in recreation activities, computer classes, tutoring and special activities such as studio production.”<sup>16</sup>

The program use *Why kNOW*, a popular abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculum created by a crisis pregnancy center in Tennessee. SIECUS reviewed *Why kNOW* and found that it offers limited information about important topics in human sexuality such as puberty, anatomy, and human reproduction, and no information about sexual orientation and gender identity. The information that is included is outdated, inaccurate, and misleading. In addition, *Why kNOW* relies on negative messages, distorts information, and presents biased views on gender, marriage, family structure, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. For example, the curriculum tells students that the tradition of lifting the veil shows that “the groom [is] the only man allowed to uncover the bride,” and demonstrates “her respect for him by illustrating that she [has] not allowed any other man to lay claim to her.”<sup>17</sup>

Reverend Charles Sims of Know Your Bible Ministries (KYBM), which operates Operation Turn Around, stated that the mission of the program is “to provide abstinence education, leadership, character development, and adolescent risk behavior intervention against drugs, alcohol, sex and violence for the purpose of preparing young people and young adults to make healthy choices while pursuing their dreams to become self-sufficient leaders in their families, schools, communities, faith-based [lives] and careers.”<sup>18</sup> Operation Turn Around hosted the Motivations, Inc.’s presentation “Real Love...The Power of Choices / Abstinence Until Marriage” in two school assemblies and a community church event attended by 1,500 youth.<sup>19</sup>

In 2007, KYBM/Operation Turn Around was audited by Louisiana’s Office of State Inspector General because of allegations that KYBM misspent federal funds.<sup>20</sup> The audit concluded that KYBM may not be a true non-profit organization due to the inactivity of its board and “the manner in which Mr. Sims exerts complete control over the organization and its finances.”<sup>21</sup> The audit also showed that funds were not properly accounted for by KYBM / Operation Turn Around.<sup>22</sup>

Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc describes itself as an organization that “continues to wage war on poverty by protecting and improving the quality of lives of the low income through services of education, training, advocacy, and recreation.”<sup>23</sup>

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Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2007

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee  Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Louisiana Governor's Program on Abstinence (GPA)  <a href="http://www.abstinencedu.com">www.abstinencedu.com</a>	\$1,283,563 federal	Title V
The Church United for Community Development  2007–2011	\$589,258	CBAE
Operation Turn Around  2005–2008  <a href="http://www.operationturnaround.org">www.operationturnaround.org</a>	\$347,844	CBAE
Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc.  2007–2011  <a href="http://www.quadarea.org">www.quadarea.org</a>	\$389,380	CBAE

**Adolescent Health Contact<sup>24</sup>**

Gail Dignam  
 State Coordinator/Director  
 Louisiana Governor's Program on Abstinence  
 150 Third St., Suite 404  
 Baton Rouge, LA 70801  
 Phone: (225) 342-5818

**Louisiana Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

ACLU of Louisiana  
 P.O. Box 56157  
 New Orleans, LA 70156  
 Phone: (504) 522-0617  
[www.laclu.org](http://www.laclu.org)

AIDS Law of Louisiana  
 P.O. Box 30203  
 New Orleans, LA 70190  
 Phone: (504) 568-1631  
[www.aidslaw.org](http://www.aidslaw.org)

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Louisiana NOW  
P.O. Box 750356  
New Orleans, LA 70175  
Phone: (504) 364-4444  
[www.now.org/chapters/la.html](http://www.now.org/chapters/la.html)

NO/AIDS Task Force  
2601 Tulane Ave., Suite 500  
New Orleans, LA 70119  
Phone: (504) 821-2601  
[www.noaidstaskforce.org](http://www.noaidstaskforce.org)

Planned Parenthood of Louisiana and the  
Mississippi Delta  
8200 Hampton St., Suite 229  
New Orleans, LA 70118  
Phone: (504) 861-7550  
[www.plannedparenthoodlouisiana.org](http://www.plannedparenthoodlouisiana.org)

**Louisiana Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Louisiana Family Forum  
655 St. Ferdinand St.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
Phone: (225) 344-8533  
[www.lafamilyforum.org](http://www.lafamilyforum.org)

Louisiana Right to Life Federation  
P.O. Box 7962  
Metairie, LA 70010  
Phone: (504) 835-6520  
[www.prolifelouisiana.org](http://www.prolifelouisiana.org)

**Newspapers in Louisiana**<sup>25</sup>

*The Advocate*  
Newsroom  
PO Box 588  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821  
Phone: (225) 388-0282  
[www.theadvocate.com](http://www.theadvocate.com)

*The Daily Advertiser*  
Newsroom  
221 Jefferson St.  
Lafayette, LA 70501  
Phone: (337) 289-6300  
[www.theadvertiser.com](http://www.theadvertiser.com)

*Lake Charles American Press*  
Newsroom  
4900 Highway 90 E  
Lake Charles, LA 70615  
Phone: (337) 494-4080  
[www.americanpress.com](http://www.americanpress.com)

*The News-Star*  
Newsroom  
411 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St.  
Monroe, LA 71201  
Phone: (318) 322-5161  
[www.thenewsstar.com](http://www.thenewsstar.com)

*The Times*  
Newsroom  
22 Lake St.  
Shreveport, LA 71101  
Phone: (318) 459-3200  
[www.shreveporttime.coms](http://www.shreveporttime.coms)

*Times-Picayune*  
Newsroom  
3800 Howard Ave.  
New Orleans, LA 70125  
Phone: (504) 826-3300  
[www.nola.com/t-p](http://www.nola.com/t-p)

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the fiscal year for the federal government which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2007 begins on October 1, 2006 and ends on September 30, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et. al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007,” Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 57.SS-4 (6 June 2008), accessed 4 June 2008, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> “Teacher Training,” Louisiana Governor’s Program on Abstinence, accessed 23 March 2008, <http://www.abstinencedu.com/explore.cfm/curriculum/teachertraining>.

<sup>4</sup> “Director’s Greeting,” Louisiana Governor’s Program on Abstinence, accessed 23 March 2008, <<http://www.abstinencedu.com/explore.cfm/louisianagpa/directorsgreeting>>.

<sup>5</sup> “AbstinencEdu.com,” Louisiana Governor’s Program on Abstinence (GPA), (2004), accessed 29 November 2004, <<http://www.abstinencedu.com>>.

<sup>6</sup> Louise. Melling, “Letter Addressing Settlement Violations in ACLU of Louisiana v. Foster,” 15 November 2004, accessed 29 November 2004, <<http://www.aclu.org/ReproductiveRights/ReproductiveRights.cfm?ID=17026&c=147>>.

<sup>7</sup> Melling.

<sup>8</sup> “Library, Medical Info: Safe Sex,” Louisiana Governor’s Program on Abstinence (GPA), (2004), accessed 29 November 2004, <<http://www.abstinencedu.com>>.

<sup>9</sup> Louisiana ACLU, “ACLU Asks Louisiana to Remove Religious Content from Abstinence-Only Website, Citing Numerous Violations of 2002 Agreement,” Press Release published 17 November 2004, accessed 22 November 2004, <<http://www.laclu.org/News/2004/Nov17GPA.htm>>.

<sup>10</sup> Laura. Maggi, “Blanco defends Abstinence Web Site,” *Times-Picayune*, 10 December 2004, accessed on Lexis-Nexis, 8 January 2005.

<sup>11</sup> “Ask the Experts,” Louisiana Governor’s Program on Abstinence, accessed 3 June 2008, <<http://www.abstinencedu.com/explore.cfm/viewqanda/>>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Pam. Stenzel, *Sex Still Has a Price Tag* (Littleton, CO: Enlighten Communications, Inc., 2006). See SIECUS’ review at <<http://www.communityactionkit.org/reviews/Stenzel.html>>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> “Donaldsonville to get abstinence grantGet Abstinence Grant,” *The Advocate*, 24 October 2003, accessed 3 April 2008, <[http://www.religionandsocialpolicy.org/news/article\\_print.cfm?id=1004](http://www.religionandsocialpolicy.org/news/article_print.cfm?id=1004)>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> K. Frainie, *Why kNOw Abstinence Education Program Teacher’s Manual*, (Chattanooga, TN: Why kNOw Abstinence Education Programs, A Division of AAA Women’s Services, 2002). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of *Why kNOw* at <<http://www.communityactionkit.org/reviews/WhyKnow.html>>.

<sup>18</sup> S. T. Herring, “Possible Uses for Old Homer Junior High Discussed,” *The Guardian-Journal*, 27 July 2006, accessed 18 March 2008, <<http://www.kcwd.com/gj/2006/briefs-2006-07-27.html>>.

<sup>19</sup> “Up and Coming Events,” Motivations, Inc., accessed 18 March 2008, <<http://www.motivationsinc.org/Web/Pages/EventPage.html>>.

<sup>20</sup> State of Louisiana Office of State Inspector General, “Know Your Bible Ministries,” 2 November 2007, accessed 18 March 2008, <<http://www.doa.state.la.us/OIG/pdf%20reports/2007/1070019.pdf>>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> “About Us,” Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc., 9 February 2006, accessed 3 April 2008, <<http://www.quadarea.org/aboutus.htm>>.

<sup>24</sup> SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

<sup>25</sup> This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means inclusive and does not contain the local level newspapers which are integral to getting your message out to your community. SIECUS strongly urges you to follow stories about the issues that concern you on the national, state, and local level by using an internet news alert service such as [Google alerts](#), becoming an avid reader of your local papers, and establishing relationships with reporters who cover your issues. For more information on how to achieve your media goals visit the SIECUS [Community Action Kit](#).