

CONCERNED CLERGY FOR CHOICE

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CLERGY ADVOCATE FOR REAL SEX EDUCATION FOR NEW YORK TEENS

Albany, NY (4/12/05)—Pro-choice clergy from across New York today met with state legislators in Albany to support the “Healthy Teens Act.” Members of Concerned Clergy for Choice and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice advocated for legislation to create a state grant program to fund age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education. Clergy met with more than 50 representatives of the New York State Legislature, including Assemblymember Richard Gottfried (D-NYC) and Senator Nick Spano (R-Yonkers), sponsors of the Healthy Teens Act.

In 2003, 39% of female high school students and 46% of male high school students in New York State reported having had sexual intercourse. The Healthy Teens Act will provide resources to communities to promote abstinence and parent-teen communication while also offering vital information to help young people to protect themselves against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

“As members of the clergy, we have a moral obligation to ensure that teens have access to accurate information to help them make responsible decisions about their sexuality,” said Concerned Clergy for Choice Director Rabbi Dennis Ross. “Teens, parents and legislators understand the need for the Healthy Teens Act, which would fund programs that provide medically accurate information that could save lives.”

In New York State, abstinence-only programs receive more than \$11 million in state and federal funds. These programs fail to provide information about contraception and disease prevention, and prohibit teachers from honestly answering students’ questions. A recent study found that false, misleading or distorted health information was included in 80% of the abstinence-only curricula used by more than two-thirds of the grantees of the largest federal source of funding.

A 2003 Zogby poll found that 77% of New Yorkers support age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education.

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