

To: Minnesota House of Representatives Committee on Education Policy

From: Claudia Liverseed, Eagan 51B

My name is Claudia Liverseed, I am 18 years old, from Eagan, and a constituent in MN House District 51B represented by Representative Liz Reyer. I am writing in support of House File 358/Senate File 632.

Access to comprehensive sex education in its entirety - age-appropriate, culturally responsive, LGBTQ+ inclusive, and scientifically and medically accurate - should be a right for every student. We deserve to learn about our own bodies in an open and shame-free environment in order to empower us to make the safest decisions for ourselves in the future.

However, this is the exact opposite of what is currently being taught in Minnesota schools. The curriculum is variable across districts, and for most, extremely lacking. I am personally horrified by my experience at Eagan High School. We only were taught abstinence only sex ed, and about the symptoms of various STIs. We learned nothing about protection, how to get tested for STIs, consent, and other ways to keep ourselves and others safe. To make matters worse we had an outside religious figure come in to teach us about "Jack" who got "Jill" pregnant and ruined her entire life. We were given buttons that said, "I'm Worth Waiting For" and signed "Abstinence Pledges." I felt humiliated and objectified, and even though it was a presentation to the class, I felt as though my agency and bodily autonomy was being taken away. My peers and I should be given the knowledge to make our own decisions about sex and reproductive health, not having religious figures use fear-tactics and shame us about questions of health and safety.

HF 358/SF 632 is the first step in ensuring that all students have the necessary information to advocate for themselves, and to help create better health outcomes, whether it be helping to stop STIs, unplanned pregnancies, or sexual assaults. The sex education we receive directly impacts the lives of each and every Minnesota student, and the Education Policy Committee needs to prioritize our voices and overwhelming support when voting on this bill. Simply put, knowledge is power, and HF 358/SF 632 ensures that students have the necessary knowledge about our own bodies to be empowered to make safe and healthy decisions.

Thank you for your time,

Claudia Liverseed