

To: Minnesota House of Representatives Committee on Education Policy

From: Emily Christian, she/her, Richfield, MN; Richfield Public School District

My name is Emily Christian, I am 24 years old, from Richfield and a constituent in MN House District 63B represented by Representative Greenman. I am writing in support of House File 358/Senate File 632.

I support comprehensive, inclusive sexual education for Minnesota students because I think it is one of the most important harm reduction means which public education can impact on the students that pass through the system. Of all the topics that are taught at our public schools, sexual education is one that will infiltrate all students' lives regardless of their various career paths. Sexuality is a huge part of adult life and the lack of information provided in the current sexual education requirements is failing the upcoming generations of Minnesotans. I grew up in a Catholic family and my parents chose to send me and my siblings to public schools over the catholic private school in our town. The amount of similarities I experienced in the sexual education classes at Richfield Public High and the sexual education I received through my catholic church confirmation classes were striking. Our public education should be free of religious implication in order to service the diverse population of our school district. Unfortunately, abstinence and sex-shaming were large themes in both of the curriculums I experienced. My public school sex ed left out any information on LGBTQ+ communities and sexual health. This left my catholic school sex ed curriculum to fill in the holes and provide me with medically and scientifically inaccurate information. The inadequate sexual education which I received through the Richfield Public school system has impacted my entire life. It impacted my parents (both alums of Minnesota public schools) who were never armed with the resources to provide an accurate sexual education at home for their children. It has impacted the abuse I have experienced from partners throughout my life. Abusers who have been abused themselves by a system that allows them to grow into ignorance and flounder in their own frustrations. It has impacted the ways in which I have been able to seek medically and scientifically accurate information with the internet as my main resource. This has been a blessing and a curse trying to discern inaccurate and accurate information regarding pleasure and sexual health.

The policy outlined in HF 358/SF 632 impacts the lives of young Minnesotans like myself. I implore the Education Policy Committee to consider the lived experiences of students such as myself across our state who are expressing overwhelming support for this bill. Increased access to a comprehensive, shame-free, medically accurate, and culturally responsive sex-education bill would improve the lives and overall health of current and future generation of Minnesotans.

Thanks you for your time,

Emily Ann Christian

(she/her)

