

To: Minnesota House of Representatives Committee on Education Policy

From: Maple Williams, Two Harbors District 8

My name is Maple Williams, I am 17 years old, from Two Harbors and a constituent in MN House District 8 represented by Representative Mary Murphy. I am writing in support of House File 358/Senate File 632.

I support increased access to comprehensive sex education for Minnesota students as I feel this is an essential part of education for young people. Not knowing how your body works can be scary. I have taken a sex-education class on my own where people my age talked about their experiences with sex-ed where they lived and the knowledge they had. All of which had said they had a bad experience and had little knowledge. I remember one person, who owned a vagina, saying they did not know where urine came from. This is scary in my mind. This lack of knowledge of how your body functions or which parts have which purposes is also confusing. This confusion should not be there, though, as we as students in Minnesota, and everywhere, should have comprehensive sex-ed where we learn this, our bodily anatomy, and its functions, along with other elements of sex-ed that are very important, such as LGBTQIA+ and disability inclusivity. This is especially important to me as I am a part of the LGBTQIA+ community. In my district, and I feel in many others in Minnesota, we do not learn about LGBTQIA+ sex. Basically, it was completely ignored, and this made me, as a part of this community, also feel ignored along with afraid. Afraid that there was something wrong with me as I was not in the conversation at all. Only perpetuating Heteronormative thinking. This just shows how bad my experience with sex-ed was in my district. My experience being bad only highlights the need for increased access to sex-ed for me and my peers. This bad experience and lack of sex-education has impacted my life significantly. I did not know how people with vaginas had sex with each other let alone how they did this safely. This was scary. I did not even know there was protection for this until I, myself, had to research it. This lack of knowledge can be dangerous for student's overall health, especially in the LGBTQIA+ community. Knowing what protection to use and how to use it can really change someone's life and therefore we need comprehensive sex-ed in Minnesota now. There are so many other reasons we need it in MN now also. Creating better, more uniform standards for sex-education in all MN school districts will create a positive impact in young people in Minnesota by giving them knowledge that will help them make safe, smart decisions when it comes to sex and relationships, help them understand what is happening to their bodies and how it affects their mind, and so much more.

I am now asking you as a high schooler in Minnesota to please support HF 358/SF 632. It is so important to have comprehensive sex-education that is shame free, inclusive, and medically accurate for all Minnesota students as it will improve their overall health and knowledge of their bodies. I also ask you to consider all of the support from other students across the state and their

experiences with the current sex-education when you, the members of the Education Policy Committee, vote on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Maple Williams