

To: Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee

From: Pete Noll, Acting Executive Director

Date: March 3, 2010

Subject: Opposition to Senate File 2645 (Pappas): Responsible Family Life & Sexuality Education Program

On behalf of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of the Catholic Bishops of Minnesota, I write in opposition to Senate File 2645, entitled a Responsible Family Life and Sexuality Education Program.

Due to the moral implications of the topics proposed in this measure, it is our belief that discussion of this nature is best left to the purview and direction of the child's parents and their faith-based community.

Teaching about sexually-transmitted diseases is essential to promoting good health. However, since promiscuity and premarital relations contributes to the chances of contracting such diseases, it is again most prudent that this discussion take place under the guidance and direction of the child's parents and their faith-based community. Our approach ensures that outside entities with views that may be in conflict with or contrary to those of the family on such sensitive issues as the beginning of life, marriage, and similar matters are not invited into schools to promote a unilateral perspective to impressionable children.

On a positive note, the emphasis on abstinence-first regarding unwed persons is consistent with our position. Abstinence outside of marriage is a position promoted by the Catholic Church and other mainstream religions.

In addition, the inclusion of parents regarding information, input and the option for excusing their children from all or part of the Family Life and Sexuality Education program also aligns with our position.

While there are aspects of these bills with which we concur, or with which we would have no objection, in the final analysis we oppose this bill because it is our belief, as previously stated, that discussions of this nature are best left to the purview and direction of the child's parents and their faith-based community.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our concerns regarding Senate File 2645.