



**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS**

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Dear Representative,

On behalf of the more than 1,050 congregations that make up the Unitarian Universalist Association, I urge you to support effective sexuality education for young people by **supporting H.R. 1653, the Responsible Education About Life (REAL) Act.**

The Unitarian Universalist Association believes that sexuality education should empower youth to be safe, healthy, and responsible. We believe that curricula should be honest, accurate, and effective, which is why we strongly encourage you to support the REAL Act. The REAL Act would make federal funds available to schools and community organizations that wish to use sex education curricula that:

1. Teach that abstinence is the only sure way to avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs);
2. Provide information about the health benefits and side effects of contraceptives and barriers methods;
3. Are age appropriate and medically-accurate; and
4. Do not teach or promote religion.

While there are surely many variables at work, one primary reason for these high rates of STIs and pregnancies is that far too many of our public schools do not offer effective sex education programs. Instead, many school districts exclusively use abstinence-only curricula that are religiously biased, provide no information on how young people can use contraception, and have never been proven effective by any peer-reviewed scientific study. In fact, since 1996, federal and state governments have spent \$1.4 billion on programs that are not even required to be medically accurate! **As people of faith, we believe that failing to provide young people with accurate information about how contraception can prevent disease and pregnancy is both unwise and immoral.**

Unitarian Universalists have been providing comprehensive sexuality education to youth in our congregations since 1971. In 1994, our highest policy-making body adopted a statement expressing strong support for comprehensive sexuality education in public schools. Therefore, we also stand behind legislation that supports comprehensive, age-appropriate, medically accurate sexuality education.

In the interest of religious liberty, responsible stewardship, and the health and safety of our nation's young people, I urge you to support the Real Education About Life Act.

In Faith,

Robert C. Keithan, Director