

# Study: Teens Who Pledge Virginity Try To Bend The Rules

## Poll finds they're more likely to have tried anal, oral sex.

By Abbey Goodman

Source:

<http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1498328/20050321/index.jhtml?headlines=true>

Teens who take abstinence pledges are almost as likely to be infected with sexually transmitted diseases as kids who don't, according to a new study that found pledgers tend to substitute other risky behavior for regular intercourse.

The rates of oral and anal sex among people who planned to stay abstinent until marriage are higher than among other teens who have not had intercourse at all, according to the study, published in the April issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*. Researchers found that kids believe engaging in oral and anal sex gets around the rules of abstinence programs by technically preserving their virginity.

The survey polled about 12,000 teens and was conducted by researchers from Yale and Columbia University, *The Associated Press* reports. Data was taken from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, based on an in-school questionnaire given to a sample of students in seventh through 12th grades. The questionnaires are then followed up on with a series of interviews every few years.

The authors of the study broke the teens down into two categories, "inconsistent pledgers" and "consistent pledgers," to reflect the fact that some students had changed their position between interviews. Almost 7 percent of students who did not take a pledge were diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease, compared with 6.4 percent of "inconsistent pledgers" and 4.6 percent of "consistent pledgers." Though the instances of infection were less among those who had pledged, the authors of the study said those differences were "statistically insignificant."

There was more of a difference with respect to high-risk behavior, however. Just 2 percent of kids who never took a pledge said they had engaged in oral or anal sex but not intercourse, compared with 13 percent of "consistent pledgers."

Leslee Unruh, president of the National Abstinence Clearinghouse, called the study "bogus." "Kids who pledge abstinence are taught that any word that has 'sex' in it is

considered sexual activity," she said. "Therefore oral sex is sex, and they are staying away."

### Side Note:

source: <http://www.boingboing.net/2004/07/21/virginityrulescom.html>

Update: BoingBoing reader [Charles Statman of Longview, Texas](#) -- the very municipality which begat this maelstrom of morality and malformed memes -- says: "There is absolutely, positively NOTHING to do in Longview Texas. Teenage sex is the whole point of life there. Hell, Longview is more boring than Silicon Valley. Instead of preaching an outdated theme, these holy rolling abusers of outdated flash interfaces should be educating kids and handing out condoms."

### Who's in Charge

Source: [http://www.eriposte.com/policy/appointees/bush\\_appointees.htm](http://www.eriposte.com/policy/appointees/bush_appointees.htm)

		<a href="#">CC101 Lesson: Pro-safe-sex, pro-abstinence</a>	
H14	<b>Freda McKissic Bush</b> CDC Advisory Committee on HIV and STD Prevention	"...Dr. Bush is a member of the advisory council of the Medical Institute — an anti-condom “research” group — and the director of Virginity Rules, an “abstinence-only” program (CDC, 2002b; The Medical Institute, 2002b).  Source: <a href="#">PP</a>	Still at the helm

#### [Promoting Fear and Guilt: Federally Funded Sex Education Programs Endanger Students, Violate First Amendment](#)

Posted by: APR on Oct 08, 2005 - 07:53 AM

[Sex](#)

### **Promoting Fear and Guilt: Federally Funded Sex Education Programs Endanger Students, Violate First Amendment**

by Gene C. Gerard

According to a report recently released by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS), the Bush administration is funding three sex education programs that provide misinformation and foster fear and confusion. The three curriculums SIECUS reviewed are "Passion and Principles," "Worth the Wait," and

"Navigator." Since President Bush took office these three programs have received \$4 million in federal funding. The programs are presently being taught in public high schools in more than 12 states.

All three of the programs promote abstinence until marriage and exclude any meaningful discussion of safer sex. As SIECUS notes in their report, the curriculums argue against the use of condoms, promote fear and guilt in adolescents, and contain blatant religious messages. In the last five years the Bush administration has channeled more than \$600 million dollars into abstinence-until-marriage sex education programs. Yet no scientific study has demonstrated that curriculums that only promote abstinence curtail teenage sex.

These sex education programs all rely on messages of fear and guilt. The curriculums are predicated on the assumption that adolescents can be scared into refraining from sex, rather than making educated decisions. The Passion and Principles program tells students that if they contract AIDS, "You're heading to the grave. No Cure." It also warns, "A physical downward spiral happens once one starts engaging in sexual activities." The Worth the Wait curriculum cautions students that sex is an uncontrollable force of nature, in that, "First, you start kissing and then hands start roaming and then, oops! Sex just kind of happens."

The Navigator program asks students to contemplate possible consequences of having sex before marriage. It then suggests possibilities including AIDS, cervical cancer, depression, loneliness, stress, worry, having a bad reputation, and losing friends. As SEICUS points out, all of these programs are designed to frighten students into avoiding sex. And the curriculums are condescending in that they depict adolescents who engage in sexual activity as lacking self-control and being irresponsible. Given that recent studies indicate that almost half of all high school students have engaged in sexual intercourse, sex education programs should provide information on both abstinence and safer sex.

The three programs contain unambiguous religious messages, despite the fact that they are used in public schools. Passion and Principles encourages teachers to "teach the students that sex is the glue that ultimately links them to someone for the rest of their lives within a biblical marriage relationship." Even more brazenly, this curriculum quotes the New Testament book of Matthew, chapter six, verse 22: "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good your whole body will be full of light." This biblical verse references a segment in Passion and Principles on pornography that advises, "Pornography, like sin, promises to please me and serve me BUT its only desire is to enslave and dominate."

These curriculums take a dim view of the use of condoms and offer misleading and inaccurate medical information. Passion and Principles warns students that, "Condoms provide little or no protection [from Chlamydia] due to skin to skin transmittal." It also advises, "Nearly 1 in 3 will contract AIDS from infected partners with 100% condom use." However, countless scientific studies have documented that when condoms are used accurately they can reduce the spread of Chlamydia and prevent HIV transmission, even from an infected partner.

Worth the Wait tells adolescents, "Condoms can never protect someone from the emotional problems that can result from multiple sexual partners and premature sexual

activity." The Navigator curriculum presents a fictitious teenage female who, while engaged in sexual intercourse, realizes "that a condom wasn't going to do anything to blunt the emotional hurt she was experiencing." All of the programs operate on the false assumption that if students can be convinced that condoms do not work they will simply decide not to have sex. In reality, it is equally likely that adolescents will engage in sexual activity and simply not use condoms, since they have been told that they are not effective.

The worst of the programs is Worth the Wait. It asks students to sign a pledge promising to abstain from sexual activity until marriage, "as this is the only proven way to protect myself from out-of-wedlock pregnancy and STDs." However, in 2001 the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development released a comprehensive study of almost 100,000 teenagers who had taken a virginity pledge. The study determined that after 18 months most broke the pledge and engaged in sexual intercourse, and since they didn't plan on doing so, a majority did not use contraception. Clearly, encouraging teenagers to pledge to abstain from sex until marriage puts them at an increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

These supposed sex education programs pose a number of significant issues. The Bush administration is violating the separation of church and state, as guaranteed by the First Amendment, by spending federal tax dollars on the programs. And the curriculums provide false and misleading information to many high school students. A competent sex education program furnishes adolescents with factual, unbiased information and encourages them to make smart choices. These programs do neither.

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*Gene C. Gerard taught history, religion, and ethics for 14 years at several colleges in the Southwest and is contributing author to the forthcoming book "Americans at War," by Greenwood Press. His articles have appeared in Intervention Magazine, The Free Press, The Modern Tribune, Political Affairs Magazine, Alternative Press Review, and The Palestine Chronicle.*

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<http://www.altpr.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=501&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>

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**MEDICAL EXAMINER:** HEALTH AND MEDICINE EXPLAINED.

## **No More Virginal** SPEND \$1 BILLION ON

**ABSTINENCE EDUCATION. GET NOTHING.**

*By Amanda Schaffer*

Posted Friday, April 20, 2007, at 12:16 PM ET

Source: <http://www.slate.com/id/2164742/>



*Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland*

In the past decade, the federal government has spent more than \$1 billion on programs that promote abstinence as the only healthy choice to make about sex before marriage. Last week, the government's own long-term [evaluation](#) of the initiatives, required by Congress in 1997, showed that these programs seem to accomplish essentially nothing. That's right: Nada. Students in the programs were no more likely to abstain from sex than their peers. And if they did lose their virginity, they tended to do so at the same average age and have the same number of sexual partners as other students did. As Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., [put it](#), "In short, American taxpayers appear to have paid over 1 billion federal dollars for programs that have no impact."

The new study, rigorously conducted by Mathematica Policy Research Inc. on behalf of the government, should be the death knell for [abstinence-only programs, which have also drawn criticism for perpetuating gender stereotypes, spreading medical inaccuracies, and ignoring the separation of church and state](#). While the Bush administration shows few signs of rethinking this pet project, a growing number of states have begun to wise up, rejecting millions in federal funding because they come with abstinence strings attached. The problem is that even larger sums of federal money now bypass state governments and flow directly to community abstinence groups, often in the form of multiyear grants, with little or no oversight. It's up to Congress to stanch this ooze.

The Mathematica study is long-term and has scientific bona fides that are hard to dispute. [The researchers focused on four abstinence-only education programs—in Virginia, Florida, Wisconsin, and Mississippi—that received federal money through a program called Title V](#). Beginning in 1999, the researchers randomly assigned more than 2,000 students either to receive or not to receive abstinence-only instruction, in addition to whatever else they did in school. Then in 2005-06, when the students were on average 16½, the researchers surveyed both groups about their sexual attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. Remarkably, those who'd gotten the abstinence-only ed—some as often as every school day for up to four years—did not behave differently than their peers.

The abstinence-taught teens were no more likely to abstain from sex or even to wait longer before losing their virginity. (In both groups, those who'd had sex did so for the first time at an average age just shy of 15.) The abstinence-taught kids knew as much as the others about the risks of unprotected sex and the consequences of sexually transmitted diseases and were just as likely to use a condom. That's the good news—though it's contradicted by [previous work](#) by sociologists Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner that suggested kids who pledge to be abstinent until marriage are less likely to protect themselves with condoms if and when they do have sex.

Undeterred by the Mathematica findings—"new and diverse abstinence programs have grown around the country" since the research began in the 1990s, the Department of Health and Human Services said in a statement—President Bush has asked for \$191 million for abstinence education for fiscal year 2008, an increase of \$28 million over this fiscal year.

But the states may refuse to take the money that flows through them. States are required to match 75 percent of the funds they receive for abstinence ed through Title V, and this can jeopardize other priorities. Also, teaching abstinence must be the "exclusive purpose" of programs paid for out of this federal pot. Programs cannot promote the use of condoms or contraception, and they must tell kids that sex outside of marriage is "likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects." Given that the public is largely [unconvinced](#) by this rigid approach—and that government reports reveal medical inaccuracies in abstinence curricula, not to mention this month's evidence that abstinence-ed doesn't make kids more abstinent—it's no wonder that more and more governors are choosing to bail.

Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland announced recently that his state would withdraw from Title V for the coming year, rejecting more than \$1 million in federal funds and also freeing about \$500,000 in the state budget. (As a spokesman [explained](#), "[I]f the state is going to spend money on teaching and protecting kids, the governor believes it is better to spend it in a smarter, more comprehensive approach.") New Jersey, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Montana, and Maine have also pulled out or plan to do so by the end of the year. (And California never participated to begin with.) The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, a policy and advocacy group, estimates that together, these eight states are turning down about \$11 million of the total \$50 million allocated to the Title V program.

But the rest of that \$50 million is only part of the problem. In 2000, [another federal cookie jar opened](#). [Community-Based Abstinence Education](#), as the initiative is now called, channels money directly to community groups rather than through state governments. And starting last year, the grant processes and rules were changed. Now participants have to focus *less* on measurable public health goals and *more* on chastity as

a form of moral virtue. Programs "must not ... refer to abstinence as a form of contraception," but should teach that "abstinence reflects qualities of personal integrity and is honorable," according to the new [guidelines](#). (Programs should also teach students to watch out for corrupt classmates, avoiding "parties where sexually active peers are likely to attend.") The length of grants was increased to five years, which means fewer opportunities for oversight. And so far, Congress hasn't helped either. Congressional earmarks to abstinence-only groups, like the Abstinence Clearinghouse and the Medical Institute, [continue](#) apace.

Now that the Democrats are in control, they need to crack down. The current funding for Title V expires in June and, given this latest study, should expire for good. As for money that flows directly to community groups, Congress could cut this, too, despite the five-year grants, to decrease the number of new grants offered or possibly reduce payments to existing grantees. Now that the government has collected its own evidence that teaching about abstinence doesn't make kids less sexually active, it's time to redirect money to comprehensive sex ed. The kind that teaches kids to protect themselves with condoms and is much more likely to do some good.