



65 E. Wacker Place  
Suite 1620  
Chicago, IL 60601  
Ph. 312-368-1066  
Fx. 312-368-1090

108 E. Cook St.  
Springfield, IL 62704  
Ph. 217-528-9200  
Fx. 217-528-7214

[www.ilcatholic.org](http://www.ilcatholic.org)  
Diocese of Belleville  
Archdiocese of Chicago  
Diocese of Joliet  
Diocese of Peoria  
Diocese of Rockford  
Diocese of Springfield-in-IL

## **Statement in Opposition to SB 818**

SB 818 mandates adding considerable course material and instruction regarding sex education in public schools. We support efforts that help students learn about sex education, but we feel compelled to speak about this bill because it recommends a significant change to the content of what students are being taught in our public schools. This impacts public school teachers who are Catholic as well as students who are Catholic attending public schools.

The legislation does provide for an opt-out so parents can remove children from the mandates in SB 818, however parents may not be aware of that opt-out and teachers who have moral objections to teaching these requirements are not given a choice to opt out.

The sexual education program mandated in SB 818 must conform to standards put forth in the National Education Sex Standards. These standards developed by SEICUS – Sex Ed for Social Change are the minimal standards for grades K-12 and we are concerned that these standards developed by a private organization can change without proper input from parents. SEICUS is an organization that, according to its website believes that sex education has the power to spark large-scale social change. It is interesting to note that these standards were selected when there are standards put forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

The standards available on SEICUS' website should be given proper vetting before being mandated in Illinois state law. Here are a few examples that concern us.

- By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, one of the standards called “analyzing Influences” is to provide examples of how friends, families, media, society and the culture influence ways in which boys and girls think they should act. This is far too ambiguous and open to interpretation.
- By the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, one of the core concepts students should be able to define is that sexual orientation is the romantic attraction of an individual to someone of the same gender or of a different gender. This is not appropriate for children this age.
- By the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, one of the self-management standards is that students should be able to describe the steps to using a condom correctly. This puts children

who want to maintain abstinent until marriage in a very uncomfortable, awkward situation.

In addition to the concerns about the National Education Sex Standards, we wish to call your attention to those parts of the bill that require course material and instruction to provide information about local resources where students can obtain information and confidential services related to reproductive health, gender identity and gender expression. As you know, the Illinois Parental Notification of Abortion Act is in danger of being repealed. That, along with this legislation, is a major attack on parents in our state. Taken together, it is possible for a minor to find out at her public school how to procure an abortion without a parent ever being notified.

It is worth repeating that abstinence is still the most effective means to prevent unwanted pregnancies, sexual transmitted disease and other emotional issues associated with sexual activity outside of marriage and that parents must remain the primary educators of their children. We remain concerned that this legislation minimizes abstinence being taught in our public schools at the expense of a broader agenda that exposes children whose parents have moral objections to this instruction. In addition, teachers will be forced to teach against their personal and religious values.