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California State Senate



NEWTON R. RUSSELL
SENATOR TWENTY-FIRST DISTRICT

MINORITY WHIP

November 9, 1988

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Ronald Epstein, Chancellor of the Americas
Douglas M. Powers, Chancellor of the Europe Region
Pai-cho Ho, Chancellor of the Asian Region
Dharma Realm Buddhist University
Talmage, California 95481-0217

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your letter expressing your interest in my Senate Bill 2394, which requires that public schools teach students to be sexually abstinent before marriage.

Your comments about the bill are well taken and I appreciate your sharing with me the tenets of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association's philosophy on homosexuality, abortion, and sexual promiscuity. It appears that your beliefs parallel those of many other religious institutions.

While I realize that SB 2394 is not in and of itself a cure for the ills affecting society, I believe it is a step in the right direction for those of us who are gravely concerned about protecting our young people from out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

You state in your letter that while you commend the approach of teaching "restraint in sexual matters," you caution that "...young people are not likely to voluntarily practice restraint unless they are also taught why loose sexual behavior is harmful to them and to their physical and mental development."

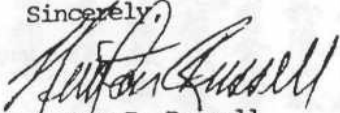
Perhaps you have not seen a copy of my bill, but because I had this same concern, I drafted the bill to require that sex education material and instruction must include all the following criteria:

- Present material in an age appropriate manner;
- stress that all methods of contraception, other than abstinence, may fail to prevent pregnancy and cite the failure and success rates of other methods;
- cite the failure and success rates of condoms, based on the latest medical information, in preventing AIDS and STD's;
- discuss the possible emotional and psychological consequences of preadolescent and adolescent sexual intercourse outside of marriage and the consequences of adolescent pregnancy;

- stress that pupils should abstain from sexual intercourse until they are ready for marriage;
- teach honor and respect for monogamous heterosexual marriage;
- advise pupils of the laws regarding their financial responsibility to children born in and out of wedlock;
- advise pupils that it is unlawful for males to have sexual relations with females under the age of 18 and to whom they are not married;
- encourage pupils to base their actions on reasoning, self-discipline, sense of responsibility, self-control and ethical considerations;
- teach pupils not to make unwanted physical and verbal sexual advances, how to reject sexual advances and encourage pupils to resist negative peer pressure.

I would have preferred putting more emphasis on teaching morals, but the reality of the liberal political bent of the Legislature precluded that possibility. As it was, the ACLU bitterly opposed teaching monogamous heterosexual marriage, and managed to kill the bill the first time it was heard in the Assembly Education Committee. Fortunately, I was able to get reconsideration of the measure, but it was passed by the Committee only after it was watered down.

Again, thank you for your good letter. I very much appreciated hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Newton R. Russell
Senator, 21st District