



We're Outta Here: 25 States Withdraw from Crumbling Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program

As of August 2008, at least 25 states are no longer participating in the crumbling Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program. Begun in 1998, this program has seen a 40 percent decrease in participation by states in the last two years.¹ Of the states that have withdrawn, *80 percent* have done so based on strong research and evaluations showing that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs are incredibly ineffective. These principled rejections come from diverse parts of the country and represent the broader, national shift away from abstinence-only-until-marriage programs after a disastrous and exponential decade-long expansion.

Out Right Rejections Governors, along with support from their health departments across the country are taking a stand against Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program:

- “Governor [Kaine] supports abstinence-based education, but the governor wants to see us funding programs that are evidence-based.”
–Governor Tim Kaine of Virginia²
- “[Arizona should not fund] an educational system that does not educate.”
– Governor Janet Napolitano of Arizona³
- “We don’t believe that the science of public health is pointing in the direction of very specific and narrowly defined behavioral approaches like the one that is mandated by this funding.”
– John Auerbach, State Commissioner for Public Health of Massachusetts⁴
- “I don’t believe abstinence-only education programs work in the long run. There is some evidence that they may delay the onset of sexual activity, but over the long term, there’s no data there that show they prevent, in a statistical sense, sexual activity outside of marriage. I believe in a comprehensive approach.”
– Ohio Governor Ted Strickland⁵
- “In past years, your department has provided us with the flexibility to run this program in a manner consistent with our state core curriculum content standards (CCCS). However, strict adherence to all of the elements of the Title V abstinence education program is not consistent with the Comprehensive Health and Physical education standards and the New Jersey’s AIDS Prevention Act of 1999.”
– Fred Jacobs, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health and Services, letter to Health and Human Services⁶
- “There’s a debate now about whether kids should be taught abstinence only. Of course abstinence is the best choice for kids, and that’s an important message they need to hear. But ideology isn’t more important than our kids’ health.”
– Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle⁷

States Out of the Title V Abstinence- Only-Until- Marriage Program

Alaska
Arizona
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
Idaho
Iowa
Maine
Massachusetts
Minnesota
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
Ohio
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
Tennessee
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
State
Washington, DC
Wisconsin
Wyoming

As of August 2008

Using Comprehensive Applications

- "I'm not chasing the dollar. The state of Washington made its decision; we did as a Legislature, that we believe kids ought to be taught a comprehensive sex education with abstinence-only included in that program." -- Senate Education Committee Chairwoman Rosemary McAuliffe, a sponsor of Washington State's *Healthy Youth Act* which conflicts with the strict A-H definition.⁸ She continued, "If the federal government will not agree to that and will not fund it because we aren't doing that, I guess that's too bad. I wish they would look at a balance because that's what kids need."⁹

Administrative Withdrawals

One such state, Idaho, stopped participating in the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program in Fiscal Year 2008 partially due to these reasons.¹⁰ However, Elke Shaw-Tulloch, an official from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, cited other reasons including: "At the same time, there was mounting evidence the abstinence programs weren't proving to be effective."

The fact remains that **80 percent** of states out of the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program, 20 out of 25, have left the program for substantive reasons. Citing evidence against the abstinence-only-until-marriage program, states are leading the way in a paradigm shift towards a more comprehensive approach to sex education.

¹ Kevin Freaking, "States turn down US Abstinence grants," Associated Press, (24 June 2008) accessed 3 August 2008, http://www.newsvine.com/_news/2008/06/24/1606495-states-turn-down-us-abstinence-education-grants.

² Lauren Bull, "Cheers to Virginia! State Rejects Ab-Only Funds." *RH Reality Check Blog*, 21 November 2007, accessed 3 April 2008. <http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/blog/2007/11/21/three-cheers-for-virginia-state-rejects-ab-only-funds>

³ "ACLU of Arizona Applauds Governor's Rejection of Abstinence-Only Funds." *ACLU-AZ*, 18 January 2008, accessed 3 April 2008, <http://www.acluaz.org/News/PressReleases/1_18_08.html>.

⁴ http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2007/04/24/patrick_seeks_to_forgo_grant_end_classes_on_sex_abstinence/

⁵ Peter Bronson, "Abstain from Messing with Abstinence Education," *Coshocton Tribune*, 12 April 2007, accessed 9 May 2007, <<http://www.coshoctontribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070412/OPINION02/704120327/1014/OPINION>>.

⁶ Letter from Fred M. Jacobs, M.D., J.D., Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Health and Services and Lucille Davy, Commissioner for the New Jersey Department of Education to Secretary Michael Leavitt, The United States Department of Health and Human Services, 24 October 2006.

⁷ "Media Room," Office of the Governor Jim Doyle, 29 March 2007, accessed 9 May 2007, <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/journal_media_detail.asp?locid=19&prid=2580>.

⁸ Healthy Youth Coalition, "The Healthy Youth Act," accessed 3 August 2008, <http://www.healthyyouthalliance.org/hya_who.html>.

⁹ Chris McGann, "State loses federal sex education funding," *The Seattle Times*, (24 December 2007), accessed 3 August 2008, <http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/344701_education24.html>.

¹⁰ Kevin Freaking, "States turn down US Abstinence grants."