

Senator Rafferty

Representative Brennan

Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, distinguished committee members, my name is Katie and I am writing to urge you to support LD 254: An Act to Update the Sex Education & Consent Curriculum.

I think sex education in public high schools should empower and give confidence to students to learn about and make decisions about their own body on their own timeline. My experience with public high school sex education felt mediocre compared to some of my peers at other schools. While we learned about the basics, I didn't feel that we received comprehensive education on different sexualities and varied life experiences. As a queer person, I ended up learning most of my sex education through my peers in the queer community in college.

My sex education in high school was taught by our gym teacher who then also taught the health class. While most likely a staffing issue than a choice, it felt sometimes that the teacher themselves was uncomfortable speaking on sex education. That discomfort does not foster positivity and confidence or a nonjudgmental space for learning. Like many students I held that discomfort for a long time and remember feeling that discomfort impact important conversations with my doctor on birth control and with partners. LD 254 would ensure that teachers like my gym teacher would have access to high quality training, support resources, and inclusive curricula.

Comprehensive sex ed matters to me because there is so much information and media we intake that forms our opinions and everyone deserves medically accurate and nonjudgmental information from trusted sources. We need to instill power and confidence in youth to make decisions about their bodies and to learn about the varied options within sex and sexuality - respect, companionship, fun, responsibility, emotion, what impacts you how we show up etc. I hope for Maine youth to not feel shame or stigma around this subject, and I hope that Maine can invest in their educators training.

Please vote "ought to pass" on LD 254: An Act Update the Sex Education & Consent Curriculum. Thank you for your time and attention.

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