



## Testimony

SB 6305 -federal funding for abstinence only programs

Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care  
January 28, 2008

Chairperson Keiser and members of the Committee, my name is Antonio Cube and I am testifying on behalf of the Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC), which represents the Catholic bishops of Washington State on public policy issues.

The Catholic Church steadfastly holds sexuality is a gift from God and the intimacy of sex is intended for a man and a woman in a lifelong relationship. Education concerning human sexuality, if it is to be consistent with its importance in our life, can never be simply a scientific exercise. Reducing sexuality to its scientific components dehumanizes this very human reality. It is impossible to separate the scientific “facts” of human sexuality from the moral fabric in which it is enmeshed.

When we in the Catholic community teach our children about human sexuality, we place it in the larger context of the dignity of each person and our call to be in relationship with one another. Abstinence education is not concerned with what one cannot do. Rather, it is a positive affirmation of the wide-ranging implications sexuality activity has for the persons involved, and for their families and communities. Helping individuals come to a deeper appreciation and awareness of the significance of their sexuality can help them make healthy decisions about their sexual behavior.

WSCC opposes SB 6305 that makes optional the requirement that the Department of Health shall maximize federal funding for abstinence education programs as this might limit the options that parents might have in the education of their children about human sexuality.

We believe that any human sexuality education programs must be family centered, provide age appropriate material, and help place human sexuality in the context of the inherent dignity of each person. Any scientific information shared must of course be accurate; but scientific information cannot and should not be the sole content of any sexuality education program. A balanced and comprehensive view of sexuality, taught first in the home, focuses on its physical, emotional, and spiritual components. This helps children and adults make fully informed and healthy decisions about this important facet of human existence.