

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20525

March 23, 2009

Chairman David Obey  
Appropriations Committee  
H-218 US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to ensure states and local communities have a choice in their approach towards sex education for our nation's adolescents. Specifically, we appreciate your support for continued funding of the Community Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) program. We ask that you support efforts to maintain the current level of funding for CBAE in the FY2010 Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations bill and resist any attempts to change the program itself.

As you know, Congress provided nearly \$95 million for CBAE in the recent FY2009 omnibus appropriations bill. While we were disappointed that this amount is lower than what the program received in FY2008 and what the House Appropriations Committee proposed for FY2009, we were pleased to see ongoing bipartisan support for a program that has demonstrated through various studies that it is effective. This funding stream will allow the positive message about abstinence to reach millions of adolescents across the country who want to be empowered with the skills necessary to maintain their sexual health and well being.

We were particularly pleased to see that the FY2009 omnibus appropriations bill maintained a distinct firewall between funding for abstinence versus funding for "comprehensive" sex education, which receives nearly four times as much money from Congress. Opponents of abstinence education have launched a public campaign to re-define CBAE in order to give programs that teach "comprehensive" sex education access to this program's funding. This move appears to have the support of the Obama administration. To ensure CBAE grants are administered only to groups that genuinely teach abstinence education, it is critical that funding in the FY2010 Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations bill continue to define abstinence education programs according to Section 510(b)(2) of the Social Security Act. Commonly known as the "A-H" guidelines, this language ensures CBAE funding goes towards programs that actually teach abstinence, and not "abstinence first" or "comprehensive" sex education.

We also strongly support efforts to ensure abstinence education programs are scientifically accurate. We support language included in the FY2009 omnibus that requires applicants for funding to certify that materials be scientifically accurate and comply with section 317P(c)(2) of the Public Health Service Act. We believe this is a

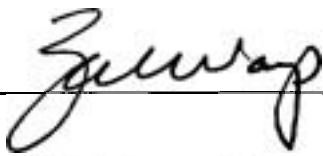
sound process that should end any discussion about whether or not programs receiving federal funding are medically or scientifically accurate. Any attempts to change this language could lead to a politically subjective process that could severely undermine the CBAE program and its purpose. We ask that you oppose any efforts aimed at amending this language.

Several studies show that students who participate in abstinence programs delay sexual onset, reduce partners when sexually active and, most importantly, discontinue sexual activity if previously sexually experienced. We appreciate your support for abstinence education programs and hope you will do everything possible to ensure CBAE maintains its current funding and program purpose.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


  
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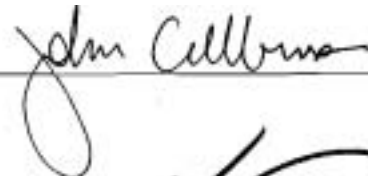
  
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**Signatories to Letter in Support of the  
Community Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) Program**

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Jean Schmidt  
Jim Jordan  
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Steve King  
Dan Burton  
Roscoe Bartlett  
Thomas Price  
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Joe Wilson

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