

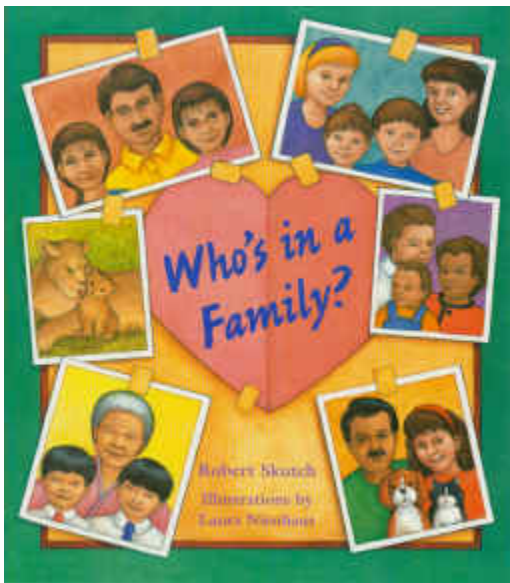
Please co-sponsor HD 3179

An act regarding parental notification and consent.

[Lead sponsors: Rep. Matthew Beaton]

Why a new Parents' Rights opt-in bill must be passed: Here's some of what's NOT covered by the current Parental Notification law (now *opt-out*). The new bill would require parents to opt in their child to any of the following:

Human Sexuality Education – Schools often fail to give proper advance notification to parents, or complete information on curriculum materials. Discussions often go beyond planned curriculum in any case. Politically charged issues such as abortion, “gender identity,” partner abuse, etc. (which may be claimed to fall outside “human sexuality education or issues”) may now be included in regular sex ed classes, without parents’ knowledge.



“Alternative families” and “gay marriage” subject matter – In the David Parker case in Lexington, GLBT activists successfully argued in court that elementary story books about same-sex-couple headed households (*Who's in a Family?*) or two princes marrying (*King & King*) were *not* about “human sexuality issues,” but about different kinds of families, diversity, and tolerance (so did not fall under the existing parental notification law). Schools will also bring in outside speakers or guests to promote “diversity” and “tolerance,” such as in a 3rd-grade class in Newton where a father undergoing “transition” to become a “woman” came in to speak to the class without parental notification. One parent found out only because her daughter came home in great distress. Students have been given flyers promoting “gay marriage” and “transgender rights” without parents’ knowledge, as these are construed to be “civil rights” issues, rather than “human sexuality issues.”

School GLBT clubs (GSAs, “Gay Straight Alliances”) – Most Massachusetts high schools have them, even some middle schools. They are now pushing hard for transgenderism too. Children often attend without parents’ knowledge. The clubs funnel students to other events, such as GLBT Youth Pride and the BAGLY prom each May in Boston, or to PFLAG groups, or GLSEN conferences.

Special events, assemblies, theater productions such as “Vagina Monologues,” “Laramie Project,” “Falsettos,” diversity assemblies, “GLBT awareness” days, “Day of Silence” activities,

gathering pledges on “Ally Day,” etc. Since these are not part of the formal curriculum, they are not covered by the current law.

Transporting of students to GLSEN conferences, Youth Pride, etc – for example, the GLSEN “Fistgate” conference in 2000; and *Little Black Book* at the 2005 GLSEN conference where they received X-rated materials.

Counselor sessions – Counselors’ offices need to be included. In Acton, for example, a counselor was not only the GSA club adviser, but stocked her office with pamphlets from BAGLY, Fenway Community Health, books by Kevin Jennings (founder of GLSEN), etc. – as well as a rainbow flag. Counselors’, nurses’, and classroom offices often post “safe zone” or “safe space” stickers, signaling to students that they are welcome to discuss sexual issues there.



A door to a "safe zone" at Newton North High School in 2005.

Examples re: assemblies, counselors: In a current case (Dec. 2012) in Holyoke Mass. the School Committee is ignoring parents’ concerns about a required LGBT school assembly, where parents were not notified in advance or given the opportunity to opt out their child. In early 2005, Newton North High School in Newton, MA, began setting up “safe zones” in the school. A few months before in December 2004, two parents came and attended an assembly during “Transgender, Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian Awareness Day” where pro-gay school counselors talked to kids about being “different.” As one parent witnessed:

It was unbelievable. An adult male school counselor described at length to the kids how he “came out” as a homosexual by going to Taiwan and having affairs with males there. He stressed how important it is to feel free to come out if you feel different. “It’s just where your hormones lead you to,” he said. He asked for a show of hands of kids who’ve ever felt “different.” “You may not admit it to yourself,” he told the kids. “But unless you do something about it, it just hangs and rots inside of you...For me, coming out was an extremely hard process.” He added, “I want to reach kids at 12-13 years old. I want to be supportive.”

“Teachable moments” in classroom discussions, not part of formal lesson plan, so advance parental notice is not possible. For instance, a teacher may lead a discussion on a news story (Chaz Bono transitioning from female to male), or a student will ask a question on a controversial subject (abortion). If dealing with human sexuality issues, under the new law teachers would have to say that those subjects were not appropriate for classroom discussion.