

What's News Noelle?

Let's talk about sex

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Photo by Hannah Dyer

I picked up my little brother from middle school. “We learned about sex today. I think I understand the whole don’t-have-sex abstinence thing,” he said with a voice crack. Being accustomed to lacrosse practice and math practice worksheets... he was perplexed. “I just don’t understand how I *practice* abstinence,” he said. At that moment, I stifled my laugh.

The confusion over sex is exacerbated due to inept sexual education. The current curriculum teaches sex in a hard-line approach; abstinence is always the answer. Sex is between a man and woman, or not at all. If you do have sex, you will conceive a child or a malefic STD. If you have not been raped, you have not been sexually assaulted. The problem is that sex isn’t black and white; it is confusing and complex.

Enter House Bill 1032. Laura Reeves, a mom and advocate, testified at Colorado Congress on behalf of this bill. Reeves emphasizes the common sense funding and common sense information.

“1032 is a bill that clarifies, modernizes and funds existing CO law. It enables more young people to access the skills and information they need,” Reeves said. “We are not setting our children up for success if we are unwilling to talk openly and honestly about pregnancy, STIs, birth control, sexual health, sexual/gender identity, & rape/sexual assault/harassment.” By providing information in schools, it sets a standard for safety and respect.

If this bill was enacted years ago, I believe most of the sexual harassment cases saturating the news and the halls wouldn’t exist. For a long time, the only thing that was punished was rape... but sexual harassment is more than rape. Every inappropriate comment or gaze of the hand was just

“boys being boys”. This bill shows the many levels of assault- that anything unwanted is not allowed.

“I still sit next to him in one of my classes, but we don’t talk,” said the anonymous junior sexual assault victim. With hesitance, she told me her story. “It happened during a party, and I had a little bit to drink, but it isn’t like I didn’t agree to kiss him,” she said. “I did, but just because I say yes to a kiss, doesn’t mean I say yes to everything.” The two did not have sex, but it went farther than she wanted. Unfortunately, this situation isn’t much different than any other case, in any other school, at any other party. “I kept shaking my head ‘no’, but he wouldn’t stop,” she said.

I am glad the boundary has finally been defined. From now on, the rules should be followed. Rape was always wrong, but unfortunately, chauvinistic comments and attitudes were just part of the status quo that was ‘masculinity’. It is unjust to punish those actions because there were no guidelines.

We look at this behavior now, and it is shocking it was accepted. That’s why it’s important for all school districts across Colorado to recognize and enact Bill 1032.

The establishment of clear boundaries is one of many reasons all schools across America should opt-in to this bill. It defines not only what is wrong, but all ways in which sex can be ‘right’. The passing of this bill promotes safety to all genders and sexuality, ranging from LGBTQ, to condoms, to consent. Safe sex is the best sex, baby.

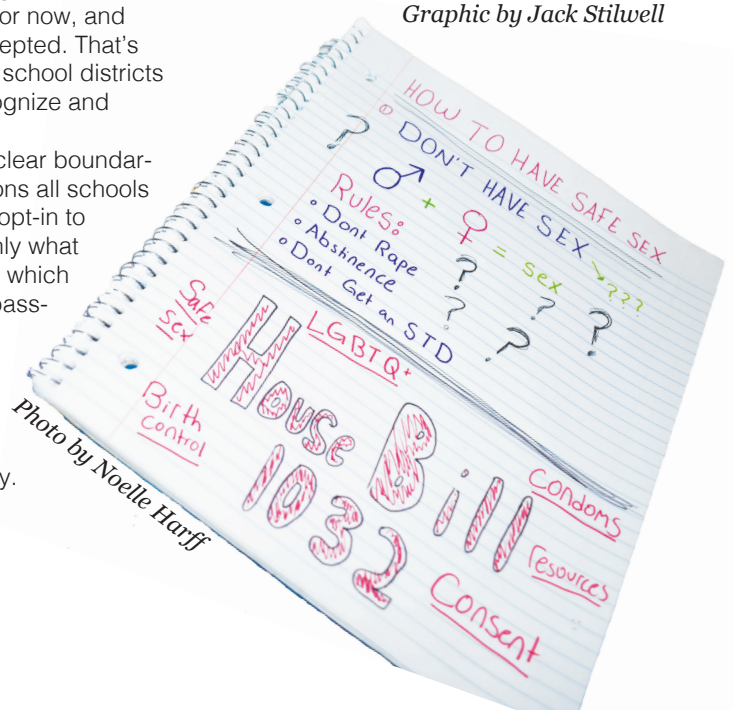


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1 in 2
sexually active people will contract an STI before the age of 25

8
US states require sex ed to teach consent

46%
of all documented abortion patients are under the age of 24

4.2
hours were spent on sex education in 2014 in high school

Sources: CNN, Guttmacher Inst.
Graphic by Jack Stilwell