

Act 768 of the 1989 Regular Session.

Act 768

HB1788

By: Representatives Keet, Hutchinson, Fairchild, Willems, Mahony,
Walker, Pollan, Matthews, and Fuller

"AN ACT TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP K THROUGH 12 FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION CURRICULUM BY JANUARY 1, 1990, FOR SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT INTERIM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION FOR EVALUATION AND SUBMISSION IN THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE 78TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

WHEREAS, one of the most visible consequences of teenage pregnancy is the loss of productive and contributing citizens due to unfulfilled educational and occupational potential; and

WHEREAS, teenage pregnancy among students often results in the loss of the ability to obtain a high school diploma which places the student in low-skill, low-wage jobs; and

WHEREAS, teenage fathers are also affected by premature parenthood, placing adolescent fathers into the labor force in low-prestige jobs; and

WHEREAS, sound instruction on human sexuality is of great importance to the maturity and responsible development of the youth of the State of Arkansas, and cannot be devoid of values; and

WHEREAS, the quality of teachers is paramount to the success of any educational program pertaining to the teaching of human sexuality; and

WHEREAS, these teachers must possess a broad knowledge of the subject matter and be comfortable with the issues and language of human sexuality; and

WHEREAS, these teachers must assume positions of role models and be flexible, able to create an atmosphere of trust among parents and students and be sensitive to the ideas and values that may be taught in the home; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to provide accurate information regarding human sexuality and dynamics of family living for implementation in the public schools for grades K through 12; and

WHEREAS, no single legislative proposal can provide a practical course of action to prevent future teenage pregnancies; and

WHEREAS, a more careful and deliberate examination of the issues is essential to fashioning appropriate and feasible preventive strategies; and

WHEREAS, there is insufficient time to recommend comprehensive legislation at this time; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education, with input from the Department of Health, has the resources and innovative capability to develop a curriculum of human sexuality and dynamics of family living for implementation in the public schools for grades K through 12;

WHEREAS, the curriculum guidelines should include instruction in family living and community relationships, the value of postponing sexual activity, human sexuality, human reproduction, character education, coordinated family planning counseling, and the etiology, prevention and effects of sexually transmitted diseases, providing for exemptions when such instruction conflicts with sincerely held religious beliefs of the parent or guardian, and should be designed to promote parental involvement, foster positive self concepts and provide mechanisms for coping with peer pressure, and the stresses of modern living according to the students' developmental stages and abilities; and

WHEREAS, appropriate training requirements for teachers of the family life education curriculum should also be developed.

NOW THEREFORE

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. The Department of Education, with input from the Department of Health, shall develop by July 1, 1989, standards of learning and curriculum guidelines for a comprehensive, sequential family life education curriculum in grades K through 12.

SECTION 2. The Department of Education shall implement family life education curriculum pilot programs developed pursuant to Section 1 of this act in not less than eight (8) nor more than twelve (12) school districts within the State of Arkansas during the 1989-1990 school year. These pilot programs shall continue through the 1990-1991 school year as developed and implemented by the Department of Education.

SECTION 3. The standards of learning, curriculum guidelines, and requirements for appropriate training of teachers as implemented in the pilot programs during the 1989-1990 school year may be submitted to the Joint Interim Committee on Education no later than July 1, 1990 for in-depth study, analysis of the state and local fiscal impact of implementation, public hearings and evaluation as compared to other similar type programs in the United States which have proven successful.

SECTION 4. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent nature are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas Code Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.

SECTION 5. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed.

SECTION 6. EMERGENCY. It is hereby found and determined by the General Assembly that there is a need to provide accurate information regarding human sexuality and dynamics of family living for implementation in the public schools to provide a practical course of action to prevent future teenage pregnancies, and that the immediate passage of this act is necessary to insure that standards of learning and curriculum guidelines for a comprehensive, sequential, family life education curriculum is implemented in grades K through 12. Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, and this act being necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

APPROVED: March 21, 1989
