

Proponent Testimony SB 156 – Linda Harvey

Thank you, Chairman Brenner and members of the Senate Education Committee, for considering my testimony in support of Senate Bill 156, the success sequence curriculum for Ohio students.

I am president of Mission America (www.missionamerica.com). I have monitored and reported on issues relating to schools in Ohio for 25 years.

There is little doubt that students today need guidance about setting high goals that will result in positive outcomes as they reach adulthood. Many young people either come from homes where low expectations are the norm, or they listen to the discouraging voices in our culture that outline obstacles that may not exist.

The Success Sequence presents a simple plan backed by research, and it is my hope that schools will enthusiastically embrace this 3-pronged plan.

What I would like to do in my testimony is focus on the 3rd part of the Success Sequence-- the goal of waiting until marriage to have children. This critical element has an especially high impact on girls. When teen girls bear children before marriage, there is a high likelihood they will drop out of school, which in turn will seriously limit their career and marriage aspirations.

But babies are a wondrous and essential part of human life. We should never be in the position of “dissing” motherhood and fatherhood. We should be singing the praises of parenthood as we urge students to wait to become parents until adulthood and marriage.

Some in our culture advise teens to go ahead and become sexually active, using “protection” to avoid pregnancy, and if that fails, to have an abortion. Nothing in the Success Sequence will (I hope) take this approach in guidance to our adolescents. This would be in violation of our current abstinence-until-marriage Ohio law, 3313.6011.

Based on the [audit by ODEW of schools’ compliance with the ORC](#) on this law, there is a troubling trend in selected Ohio schools to flagrantly ignore an abstinence message (while still disingenuously claiming they are “compliant” with the law—and not being held accountable).

The chosen curricula in some districts are based on a “Planned Parenthood” approach to sexual intimacy, normalizing teen sexual activity and spending a predominant amount of classroom time on condoms and contraception to supposedly prevent pregnancy. If abstinence were truly being advised, lessons to our Ohio students would not be so laser-focused on contraception information. I am happy to give examples upon request of these very misguided districts, and a more robust enforcement of 3313.6011 would be an extremely positive occurrence.

After the frequent failures of all this recommended contraception, those who experience an abortion (female and male) have multiple ongoing mental and emotional health struggles, often detracting from scholastic and career excellence.

So the obvious message in the Success Sequence should be to not simply wait to have children until marriage, but to wait until marriage for sexual activity.

That message would be consistent with current Ohio law.

I support SB 156 yet hope that we can keep these points in mind. Thank you again for taking time to consider my testimony.