



Sarah Fowler Arthur
State Representative

HB 240 – Parents Right to Know Act

Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur, District 99 (Joint Sponsoring with Representative Reggie Stoltsfus)

Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson, and members of the House Primary & Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to bring HB 240, the Parents Right to Know Act before you today.

Parents expect curriculum to reflect the standards found in Ohio law, especially around sensitive topics like sexual education, venereal disease, and abuse prevention. Unfortunately, we've received many reports from parents, grandparents, and community members, that they have not only heard accounts from their students about curriculum that was not in compliance with state law but when seeking to review the materials for themselves they were not afforded a prompt opportunity.

Many of these accounts were worrisome, as are the apparent obstacles and impediments being placed before these parents when trying to understand what was being taught to their children. HB 240 seeks to resolve that by bringing transparency to the state and local levels.

HB 240 does three things: first, it adds a requirement in venereal disease and teen pregnancy prevention for instruction in "risk avoidance to unhealthy behaviors" to the expected materials to be taught listed in the ORC. The new language clearly states:

(h) Teach risk avoidance to unhealthy behaviors including alcohol, drugs, dating violence, bullying, gambling, pornography, and human trafficking and encourage optimal health for all youth.

Secondly, it further clarifies that a parent has the right to know what type of curriculum is being offered, and to review any courses or supplemental materials used in the class. Therefore the local district would be required to notify all parents IF the instruction goes beyond the requirements in Ohio law and allow them an opportunity to review the curriculum and determine whether or not their child participates in the class.

Lastly, HB 240 also includes an accountability measure in which the State Board of Education is tasked with annually providing a list on the state website of the curriculum and materials each local school district is using for instruction in venereal disease and teen pregnancy prevention. Parents are afforded the right to bring a civil action against the district to enforce compliance with the law if the state audit findings reveal that a district is not in compliance.

Our society and government believe in the utmost transparency in any governmental function, it is inconceivable and unworthy of debate that this transparency should not extend to something as fundamental as a parents right to know what their child is being educated on regarding sex, disease, drugs, alcohol or pornography.