



Legislation Summary:

An Act relative to healthy youth

Bill number(s): S.268/H.544

Sponsors: Senator Sal DiDomenico and Representative James J. O'Day

What the bill does, why LWVMA supports or opposes it, and the League position relative to this bill.

This bill offers both good public policy and equal access by ensuring that children everywhere in the state will get an age-appropriate education on all health-related issues, including those related to sex education. It also upholds existing state law that lets parents opt-out their children from sex education programs.

Research shows that providing medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education helps young people stay healthy – enhancing their ability to learn. In Massachusetts today, such sex education is not universal. Some public school districts have excellent health education, while in others have no sex education at all. This bill provides guidance and a set of standards to follow when a district chooses to teach sex education.

League Position: LWVMA has a long history supporting public policy that protects reproductive choice, consumer education on maintaining health, and equal access to education for children. “The League supports action to initiate or expand programs in schools and communities throughout the state. The League opposes efforts to enact state legislation to prohibit the teaching of sex education in public schools or to prohibit the dissemination of contraceptive information or information about abortion. The League opposes abstinence-only programs and supports programs that suggest abstinence as one of several choices for teenagers”. Where We Stand p.55