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Parents and physicians Tuesday sued a Central Valley school district over its high school sex education curriculum, alleging it violated state law by only teaching about abstinence and failing to include instruction about condoms and contraception.

The lawsuit against the Clovis Unified School District, which serves 39,000 students in Fresno County, alleges that the abstinence-only curriculum is risking young people's health by denying them accurate information about how to prevent sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

"As a nurse and parent, it is heartbreaking to see young people's health compromised," said Aubree Smith, parent of a 17-year-old girl at Clovis High School who joined the lawsuit after what she said were two years of fruitless efforts to change the district's curriculum.

Jim Van Volkinburg, school board president, said he could not comment on the lawsuit because he hadn't seen it. He said he recalled parents raising the issue with a district committee but could not recall details of the complaints and said he thought the issues had been resolved.

Kelly Avants, district spokeswoman, said Clovis Unified follows state education law that promotes abstinence as "the only 100% surefire way to prevent pregnancy." Asked about allegations that the district omits information about condoms and contraception, she declined to comment.

The lawsuit was filed in Fresno by the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Northern California, Inc. on behalf of two parents in the district, the American Academy of Pediatrics California District IX and the Gay-Straight Alliance Network. The law firm of Simpson Thacher &

Bartlett provided pro bono assistance.
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