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Teresa Watanabe

...The lawsuit was filed in Fresno by the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Northern California 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.

The high school health textbook used in the district, the lawsuit alleges, teaches only that such behaviors as abstinence and "plenty of rest" can help prevent STDs.

The state Department of Education found that the textbook, "Lifetime Health" by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, did not meet legal requirements of a 2003 law that requires public schools to provide medically accurate, comprehensive information about HIV/AIDS prevention, the lawsuit alleges.

That law also requires that if sex education is provided, facts must be medically accurate, current and objective and that all Federal Drug Administration-approved methods of preventing pregnancy and STDs be included.

Fresno County has one of the highest teen pregnancy and birth rates in California. The Central Valley area also has one of the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases.

"As a nurse and parent, it is heartbreaking to see young people's health compromised," said Aubree Smith, parent of a 17-year-old daughter 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. But he added that he thought parents' concerns had been addressed.

Read the full article:

http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-sex-ed-20120822,0,23... [1]

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