

June 11, 2015

ACTION ALERT: Send Emails to Your Senators and Ask Them to Co-Sponsor the Teach Safe Relationships Act of 2015 (S. 355).

Our children are not safe because there is a culture of silence surrounding the issue of sexual violence in the United States. No one wants to believe that sexual violence could happen to our children, but the reality is that this is occurring at a rate of epidemic proportions. According to the CDC Foundation, domestic violence and violence against women and children is a global epidemic.

In the U.S.,

- 10.5 percent of high school girls, and 4.2 percent of high school boys, have been forced to have sexual intercourse, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- 48 percent of students grades 7-12 experienced sexual harassment at school during the school year.
- The CDC recommends providing age-appropriate training in healthy relationship behavior beginning at an early age, while behavior is modifiable.
- The Teach Safe Relationships Act would authorize grants to local education agencies to teach about age-appropriate safe relationship behavior in the curriculum in sex education programs for middle and high school students. Safe relationship behavior education promotes safe relationships and teaches students to recognize and prevent physical and emotional relationship abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment. The bill also covers what constitutes consent as well as teaching about emotional health and well-being in relationships.
- This legislation was introduced by Sens. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) in February, but continues to sit in the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

Sexual violence is at epidemic levels, and we need to institute prevention efforts like we would for any other public health epidemic. Please ask your senator to co-sponsor the Teach Safe Relationships Act.

Thank you for taking action to keep our children safe.

1. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/355/text>
2. <http://www.cdcfoundation.org/FY2012/Violence-Prevention>
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf>
4. <http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/Crossing-the-Line-Sexual-Harassment-at-School.pdf>
5. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6308.pdf>

Email Letter to Senator

Subject: Protect Our Children from Sexual Violence: Co-Sponsor the Teach Safe Relationships Act of 2015 (S.355)

Dear Senator:

I am writing to urge you to co-sponsor the Teach Safe Relationships Act of 2015 (S. 355). The Teach Safe Relationships Act would authorize grants to local education agencies to teach age-appropriate safe relationship behavior in the curriculum in sex education programs for middle and high school students. Safe relationship behavior education promotes safe relationships and teaches students to recognize and prevent physical and emotional relationship abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment. The bill defines what constitutes consent as well as teaching about emotional health and well-being in relationships.

Our children are not safe because there is a culture of silence surrounding the issue of sexual violence in the United States. No one wants to believe that sexual violence could happen to our children, but the reality is that this is occurring at a rate of epidemic proportions. According to the CDC Foundation, domestic violence and violence against women and children is a global epidemic.

In the U.S.,

- A Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study found 10.5 percent of high school girls and 4.2 percent of high school boys have been forced to have sexual intercourse.
- 48 percent of students grades 7-12 experienced sexual harassment at school during the school year. (AAUW)
- Sexual violence costs the U.S. \$127 billion per year, the highest yearly cost of any crime. This includes \$7.5 billion in medical care/ambulance costs, mental health care, police service, social/victims services, and property loss/damage; and \$119 billion in cost to quality of life. (National Institute of Justice)

Sexual violence is at epidemic levels, and we need to institute prevention efforts like we would for any other public health epidemic. The CDC recommends providing age-appropriate training in healthy relationship behavior beginning at an early age, while behavior is modifiable. To make this type of education accessible for every student, we will need a law to implement it. The Teach Safe Relationships Act of 2015 was introduced in February and is still in committee in the U.S. Senate. Sexual violence is everyone's issue, and we can't wait for this bill to get through the Washington gridlock. We need our country to be a leader in taking on this epidemic!

(SIGNED – YOUR NAME HERE)

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2. <http://www.cdcfoundation.org/FY2012/Violence-Prevention>
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf>
4. <http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/Crossing-the-Line-Sexual-Harassment-at-School.pdf>
5. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/victcost.pdf>