

Teach Safe Relationships Action Alert

June 11, 2015 – Updated July 22, 2015

Update: Victory! – Thanks to activists for helping to get The Teach Safe Relationships Act passed by the Senate on July 16th as part of the Every Child Achieves Act which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This legislation uses grants to encourage schools to educate middle and high school students about what it means to have truly safe relationships with oneself, partners, and other community members. Reps. Carolyn B. Maloney (NY-12), Suzanne Bonamici (OR-01) and Alma Adams (NC-12) have now introduced this act (H.R.3141) in the House. We hope the Teach Safe Relationships Act will be included in the final conference bill and we urge you to ask your house member to support this important legislation.

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.
- Safe relationship behavior education teaches students to recognize and prevent physical and emotional relationship abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment and promotes safe relationships. The bill also covers what constitutes consent as well as teaching about emotional health and well-being in relationships.
- This legislation was originally introduced by Sens. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.), and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.)

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 representative to support the Teach Safe Relationships Act.

Thank you for taking action to keep our children safe.

1. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/3141>
2. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/355/text>
3. <http://www.cdcfoundation.org/FY2012/Violence-Prevention>
4. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf>
5. <http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/Crossing-the-Line-Sexual-Harassment-at-School.pdf>
6. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6308.pdf>

Action Alert Changes

- Change title to: ACTION ALERT: Send an Email to Your Representative and Ask Her/Him to Support the Teach Safe Relationships Act of 2015 (H.R.3141).
- Change Subject line of message to: Protect Our Children from Sexual Violence: Support the Teach Safe Relationships Act of 2015 (H.R.3141)
- Change Message to:

Dear Representative:

I am writing to urge you to support the Teach Safe Relationships Act of 2015 (H.R.3141). 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 teaches students to recognize and prevent physical and emotional relationship abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment and promotes safe relationships. 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 passed the U.S. Senate

in July as part of the Every Child Achieves Act which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It has now been proposed in the House and should be included in the final conference bill. 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!

1. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/3141>
2. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/355/text>
3. <http://www.cdcfoundation.org/FY2012/Violence-Prevention>
4. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf>
5. <http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/Crossing-the-Line-Sexual-Harassment-at-School.pdf>
6. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/victcost.pdf>