

ATTACK ON “ABSTINENCE-ONLY” SEX ED IS FLAWED

On June 12, those opposed to congressional reauthorization of federal funding for abstinence-only sex education held a press conference in Washington, D.C. The coalition of 35 national organizations released a statement decrying abstinence-only programs. Two major arguments were made: funding of such programs amounts to censorship and is an affront to the principle of separation of church and state.

The Catholic League took strong objection to this position and in particular was troubled by the flawed church-state argument. “Those organizations that are opposed to abstinence-only sex education are, predictably, those who reject traditional moral values,” we said. To be specific, we cited anti-Catholic groups like Catholics for a Free Choice and the sexperts at the Sexuality Information & Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

Along with the ACLU, People for the American Way, NARAL and Planned Parenthood, this motley crew of well-heeled activists has long been at odds with the ethic of moral restraint that undergirds abstinence-only education. And in the case of many of these groups, they have a vested financial interest in the effects of promiscuity.

“If it is censorship to provide federal monies for abstinence-only sex education,” we maintained, “then it is also censorship to allow public funding of Planned Parenthood: this group spends tens of millions of taxpayer dollars in programs that reject abstinence-only.”

We are especially incensed by the dishonesty that marked this coalition. The position that says abstinence-only programs should be banned because they violate the principle of

separation of church and state is one that implodes. As we pointed out, the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ were among the 35 organizations that made up the anti-abstinence coalition. “Ergo,” we contended, “according to the logic of the coalition, the presence of these two religious bodies signals the imposition of a religious view on the public.”

Finally, the evidence shows that abstinence-only programs like True Love Waits, Sex Respect and Best Friends work best of all. The ones favored by the likes of SIECUS are not as successful.