

MEDIA IGNORE SURVEY ON RELIGION AND TEEN SEX

According to a new survey by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, there is evidence that teenagers who are religious are less likely to have sexual relations outside of marriage. In fact, the survey found that conservative Protestant and Catholic girls delay sexual activity longer than their less religious cohorts. Moreover, it is religious activity and parental influence that has the greatest effect on teenagers, not advice from the clergy. William Galston, who worked in the Clinton administration, chaired the task force.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“There is perhaps no area of survey research on human behavior that is more neglected than the influence of religious values on teenage sexual activity. Finally, we have a respected group of Americans that has come together to support such an effort. Unfortunately, the media have ignored the important findings of the survey. With the exception of AP stories on September 25 (the day the report was released) and a story in today’s *Washington Times*, the survey has been ignored (the *Washington Post* never even covered it).

“This news blackout is intentional. When the surgeon general, Dr. David Satcher, issued a report in June that argued the need to go beyond abstinence in sex education, the media gave it front-page coverage. When a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation was published last October concluding that parents want more sex education in the schools, the media did the same. Yet when a study was issued in January showing that virginity pledges can be effective, it was generally ignored.

“Stories on national security do not explain the blackout: a health story on arthritis made the A-Section of the *New York Times* today. No, the reasons are political. To be specific, our cultural elites, as well as the sex ed industry gurus at Planned Parenthood and SIECUS, are motivated by a strong animus against religion. Ergo, they censor evidence that threatens their beliefs and their pocketbooks.”