

Sample Letter to the Editor

Month XX, 2008

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the "Rethinking Abstinence" editorial (9/12/07).

The *Banger Daily News* argues, based on a narrow study by that abstinence education has "no impact on the sexual behavior of youth". As an abstinence educator, I strongly disagree.

Young people deserve a clear message that discourages casual sex in favor of building healthy relationships. There are seven peer-reviewed studies, including a review by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), showing that abstinence decreases sexual initiation in teens. A Zogby Survey shows that parents prefer abstinence education over comprehensive sex education two to one.

Abstinence programs teach age-appropriate information about contraception and STDs, but always within the context that abstinence is the only way to avoid the physical and emotional dangers of sex. An HHS study reveals that "comprehensive" programs spend less than 5% of course time promoting abstinence. The study noted that one popular program promotes graphic sexual behavior such as showering together as an acceptable "abstinent" activity.

It is unfortunate that federal funding for state abstinence programs is set to expire on September 30. The *Banger Daily News* editorial cited that since 1996, \$787.5 million has been spent on abstinence education. You failed to note that comprehensive sex education has received nearly \$1.8 billion in FY2007 alone.

That's a lot of money for a program most parents do not even want.