

## The myth of 'safe-sex'

In "Abstinence promise" (Culture, Thursday), reporter Cheryl Wetzstein aptly portrays the stark contrast in both philosophy and funding of the culture war over sex education.

The abortion activists at NARAL Pro-Choice America decry abstinence education as promoting "censorship, shame and fear." The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) charges that by advocating abstinence, President Bush "has allowed ideology and politics to triumph over science."

In reality, abstinence education employs science to expose the myth of "safe-sex," pro-

notes self-respect and encourages the strength to say no to sexual risk and exploitation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a frequent target of conservatives, recently reported that abstinence and monogamy are the most reliable ways to avoid certain sexually transmitted diseases, including human papillomavirus (HPV) ("Abstinence key to avoiding sex disease," Nation, Feb. 3).

In what must have been a blow to the groups that have reaped literally billions of taxpayer dollars to herald condoms as the holy grail of "safe sex," the CDC report to Congress concluded that

"the available scientific evidence is not sufficient to recommend condoms as a primary prevention strategy" for HPV.

Teen-agers need encouragement to save sex for marriage, and the Bush administration is facilitating such support through abstinence education funding. On behalf of the millions of parents, teen-agers, teachers and physicians who support this ethically sound and scientifically accurate approach, thank you, Mr. President.

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