

BOB SMITH

Earlier this summer, several parents stopped by to see me at the Capitol. They brought with them examples of printed materials being used in some of the nation's elementary and secondary public schools to advocate homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative. Federal funds, they reported, support the use of those publications as instructional materials in the schools.

As we talked, I looked at the materials. Two books, "Daddy's Roommate" and "Heather Has Two Mommies," are designed to promote homosexuality and same-sex parenting to 3- to 8-year-olds. An illustration in "A Kid's First Playbook About Sex," aimed at the same age group, depicts a child daydreaming and asks him to "write down some daydreams about a person or some people you may want to have sex with when you grow up." This is a book for 3-year-olds!

Other pamphlets, such as "Young, Gay and Proud" and "1 in 10," are aimed at teen-age schoolchildren. The most explicit pictures and language were contained in the "Safer Sex Handbook for Lesbians" and "Listen Up" by the Gay Men's Health Crisis; these are more like homosexual sex manuals for teen-agers than educational materials. The language in these pamphlets describes acts of sex not found in most medical textbooks; and much of it is too

Homosexuality lessons in the classroom?

graphic and obscene to describe in a family newspaper.

On March 18, 1994, The Washington Times ran a story headlined, "New York City AIDS Forum Leaves Parents Horrified." The article states:

"The New York City Youth AIDS conference that impressed AIDS Czar Kristine Gebbie outraged parents with distribution of fliers on anal sex and other homosexual practices to children as young as 12. The Feb. 12 conference at New York University Medical Center was sponsored by the New York Department of Education." Mary Cummins, a local school board member from that district, said she examined the materials and "was horrified."

As a former public school teacher and school board chairman, and as a parent of three children, I was shocked that such publications would be distributed to our children. This egregious use of tax dollars prompted me to offer an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education bill, prohibiting federal funds to any local educational agency that implements a "program or activity" that promotes or advocates homosexuality as a positive lifestyle.

When I offered my amendment, I invited my Senate colleagues to

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stop by my desk to review the materials because I could not show the publications' obscene illustrations, or quote their lewd language, during nationally televised Senate proceedings. When a young woman lobbying for this amendment tried to show senators in the Capitol copies of these pamphlets, she was threatened with arrest for distributing pornographic materials.

If these materials are so ob-

scene that they cannot be shown on the Senate floor or possessed in the Capitol, why are they fit for publicly funded distribution to schoolchildren? After full debate, the Senate answered that question — passing my amendment by the overwhelming margin of 91 to 9.

The legislation has since been attacked as "undercutting local control over education," "prohibiting the counseling of homosexuals in the schools," or "fostering intolerance of homosexuals." These distortions are perpetuated by those whose ideological disagreements with my amendment preclude them from accurately interpreting it.

My amendment is completely consistent with the principle of local control that I have always supported. This is not a mandate. Local school districts will remain free to use state and local funds, as well as private money, for instruction and educational materials that advocate homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative. If they choose to do so, however, they will forfeit their federal funds. The overwhelming majority of American taxpayers would never want their money used for these programs. They should not be forced to subsidize the advocacy of homo-

sexuality to our children in the public schools.

Contrary to the criticisms, the amendment does not prohibit counseling of homosexuals in the schools. It is wholly permissible for guidance counselors to privately consult with gay students.

My amendment does not foster intolerance of homosexuals. It simply prohibits the use of federal funds for the promotion of advocacy of homosexuality as a lifestyle. There is a substantial difference between tolerating something and promoting it.

The promotion of homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative is a highly controversial concept. No matter what side of the issue an individual takes, few want their tax dollars spent to promote homosexuality to their children in our public schools. Ninety-one senators proved that point by supporting my initiative.

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