

House may debate school gay support

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The House may take up debate today on a proposed amendment to prohibit federally funded schools from "encouraging or supporting homosexuality."

The Hancock Amendment, proposed by Rep. Mel Hancock, Missouri Republican, would be part of H.R. 6, the massive bill to reauthorize the \$10.5 billion Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The issue was fueled recently by a pamphlet and handbook used in a New York public school conference telling students about homosexual practices.

"I do not believe the parents and taxpayers of this country want their hard-earned tax dollars and our nation's public schools to be used to bombard their children with pro-homosexual propaganda," Mr. Hancock said at a news conference yesterday, where he was joined by pro-family groups.

If approved, it would affect vir-

tually all public schools.

It says "No local education agency that receives [federal] funds... shall implement or carry out a program or activity that has either the purpose or effect of encouraging or supporting homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative."

Homosexual activists denounced the Hancock amendment.

"Its broad language would have far-reaching effects," said Robin Kane, spokeswoman for the Gay & Lesbian Task Force in Washington. "It would threaten all AIDS education except those that promote abstinence."

She said it would allow only materials and programs that condemn homosexuality, prevent guidance counselors from referring teens to homosexual crisis hot lines, and ban library books with positive images of homosexuals.

The Rev. Louis Sheldon, chairman of the Traditional Values Coalition, warned that homosexual school programs had two effects: recruiting teens into the homosex-

ual lifestyle or "desensitizing children's attitudes about deviant sexual practices."

"This undermines parent's rights to instill in their children certain moral and religious values and beliefs," Mr. Sheldon said.

In New York, two homosexual sex pamphlets were used in a Feb. 12 conference sponsored by the New York City Board of Education's High School HIV/AIDS Resource Center, homosexual groups, Chemical Bank, city agencies and businesses.

"Listen Up!" a pamphlet for homosexual black teens, urges condom use when "doing the nasty" and explains how to use bleach to clean needles used in drug use. "HIV ruins your health and makes you sick," it said.

The "Safer Sex Handbook for Lesbians" advised women to use latex gloves in anal "fisting," clean razor blades after "cutting rituals," and bring "your own bag" if the sex play was going to involve enemas.

"Be sure to clean your canes, crops, whips, etc," the handbook

added under its "Welts and blisters" section.

Daniel Wolfe, spokesman for the Gay Men's Health Crisis, said yesterday that his group played only a minor role in the conference.

The pamphlet and handbook were written for adults, but were available at the school-sponsored conference because the participants were "HIV peer educators" who were "conversant with difficult sexual information," Mr. Wolfe said. Given the rise in teen AIDS cases, giving peer educators explicit and honest information "is a scientifically proven, effective means of HIV prevention," he said.

Mary A. Cummins, the grandmother who led the fight against the radical Rainbow Curriculum in New York public schools, yesterday stood with Mr. Hancock in support of his amendment.

"I'm not anti-gay," she said. "I couldn't care less what two people of the same sex are doing in their home... but when they try to bring it into our schools and try to recruit our children... then it's my business, not just theirs."