from Phyllis Schlafly

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Bad and Good Advice to Teenagers

Of all the proposals made for dealing with the problem of teen pregnancy, the most irresponsible is the one submitted on May 26 by Cook County Commissioner Maria Pappas. She is calling on Chicago and its suburbs to “vaccinate” or “immunize” all teen girls against pregnancy with the five-year Norplant implant so they can engage in unlimited sex without getting pregnant.

Ms. Pappas calls teenage mothers “Modern Day Pandoras” because, like Pandora of Greek mythology, they release plagues on mankind and bring misery and suffering on themselves and society. Ms. Pappas lays all the blame for the “Pandora Syndrome” on the girls, none on their sex partners, parents, or the failure of adults and teachers to instruct them to abstain from premarital sex.

Ms. Pappas demands that our “health and educational systems” inaugurate “programs that would have as their primary goal the vaccination of all young women against pregnancy.” In addition, she says, “Condoms should be dispensed either free or at no cost. . . Forms of prescription birth control such as pills and IUDs should also be dispensed, at cost and without necessarily requiring parental consent, through every clinic, hospital and doctor's office.”

This is a raw, heartless proposal to completely abandon young teenage girls to a degenerate environment where they will be constantly used as sex objects by boys and men. It is equivalent to selling minor girls into prostitution.

The 25-page Maria Pappas paper makes no mention of abstinence, marriage, fidelity, love, responsibility, or self-discipline. Nor does it warn against the horrendous consequences to young girls which the “vaccination” cannot prevent, such as cervical cancer, chlamydia, complications in pregnancy, ectopic pregnancy, infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease, high rates of sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, as well as the emotional trauma and suffe5ing that result from broken relationships, unwed teenage pregnancy, and abortion.

The best answers to this “animal sex” approach are spelled out in the Minority Report of the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families just released by Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) and seven other Congressmen. These

Congressmen reject the notion that teenage sexual activity is a normal and inevitable part of growing up, quoting the report of the National Commission on Children (chaired by Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV) as evidence that “half of America's 10-17 year olds are doing well and are not sexually active.”

The difference between the promiscuous half and the chaste half of teenagers is not a matter of information or knowledge. It is a matter of behavior, which is the result of the cultural message.

Those who have a vested interest in the status quo are demanding more explicit sex education courses, AIDS explanations at younger and younger ages, and “comprehensive” clinics in schools to dispense contraceptive devices. These programs not only are not working; they are counterproductive.

Over $2 billion has been spent on Title X family planning programs since 1971. Yet the number of births to unwed teens has increased dramatically along with the funding increases, and those states with the highest expenditures on family planning have had the largest increases in illegitimate births and abortions.

While sex education courses that instruct in contraceptives may increase knowledge, research indicates that their impact on behavior is insignificant. This is the conclusion of a 1984 evaluation of L4 sex education programs conducted by Douglas Kirby, Ph.D. and reported in the Journal of School Health, a 1986 review of adolescent behavior by Deborah Anne Dawson and reported in Family Planning Perspectives, and a l989 review of five studies of junior and senior high-school sex education programs by James Stout, M.D. and Frederick Rivara, M.D. and reported in Pediatrics.

The Wolf Minority Report cites numerous authorities to prove the danger and ineffectiveness of relying on a condom distribution system. The evidence was best summed up by Dr. Malcom Potts, one of the inventors of condoms and president of Family Hea1th International, “Telling a person who engages in high-risk behavior to use a condom is like telling someone who is driving drunk to use a seat belt.”

In a l990 study reported in Family Planning Perspectives, more than 1,000 sexually active girls, aged 15 and younger, were asked what topic they wanted more information on, and 84 percent checked “how to say no without hurting the other person's feelings.”

The Wolf Minority Report concluded: “Teens are seeking love and we are giving them biology classes. Teens are seeking guidance about whether to engage in sexual experimentation and we are giving them options.”

Fortunately, there are several abstinence courses now used in several thousand public schools that give teenagers the guidance they want (instead of unhealthy options). The success of these programs confirms that the battle is NOT lost. Isn’t it time we lead teenagers to the healthy lifestyle instead of abandoning them to the risky one?