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**NEW RESEARCH FINDS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR SEX EDUCATION IN NEW YORK
Republicans and Catholics Among Those Showing Strong Support
9 Out of 10 Voters Say Students Should Have Information About Contraception and STDs**

ALBANY, NY (April 3, 2006)—A new statewide poll shows widespread support across New York for comprehensive sex education and the Healthy Teens Act. Republicans and Catholics are among those who strongly affirm that students should have information about contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Lake Research Partners conducted the survey of likely New York voters in March 2006.

The study finds:

- 77% of New York voters believe that age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education should be taught in New York's public schools, with nearly six in ten expressing strong support. Favorables cross partisan lines, with 72% of Republicans in support.
- Age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education is favored by voters in New York City (78%), suburbs (76%), Upstate East (79%) and Upstate West (77%).
- Nearly nine in ten voters agree that all students should have information about contraception and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including 90% of Catholics.
- 71% of voters prefer medically accurate sex education over abstinence-only programs. Only 16% prefer abstinence-only.
- In every region of the state, voters support the Healthy Teens Act, with 72% overall support.

“There is an overwhelming consensus among voters that age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education should be taught in New York's public schools,” said Celinda Lake, president of Lake Research Partners. “Medically accurate sex education clearly trumps abstinence-only sex education.”

“Last year, more than \$13 million was spent on failed abstinence-only programs in New York,” said JoAnn Smith, president and CEO of Family Planning Advocates of New York State. “It's time to pass the Healthy Teens Act and put our resources into effective programs that prevent teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.”

The Healthy Teens Act (A.6619/S.5121) would provide funding for age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education in New York public schools. The bill is sponsored by Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried and Senator Nick Spano.

(more)

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“The numbers on teen pregnancy are staggering,” said Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried, chair of the Assembly Committee on Health. “As a parent and a grandparent, I believe the Healthy Teens Act will help New York's teens make the right decisions about their sexual activity.”

“New York ranks among the worst in rates of teen pregnancy, and rates of sexually transmitted diseases are running dangerously high,” said Senator Nick Spano. “We need to give our kids thorough and comprehensive sex education so that they can make responsible decisions to protect themselves and their partners.”

“Teenage pregnancy in the Bronx is on the rise, and the Healthy Teens Act is a step towards developing a proactive solution to a problem that plagues our communities,” said Assemblymember Naomi Rivera. “It will offer schools the opportunity to develop an age-appropriate health curriculum that will help young people to build the skills they need to protect themselves by making responsible and informed decisions about sex.”

“The Healthy Teens Act is good public health policy,” said Family Planning Advocates Board Chair Catherine Abate. “New Yorkers overwhelmingly agree. Teens need honest, accurate information to make healthy decisions.”

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