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Naveena Chittineedi Should sex education be allowed in the American schooling system? According to an article from Science Daily, " Sex education is a broad term used to describe education about human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexual intercourse, and other aspects of human sexual behavior. " Sex education is usually instructed at schools in the U. S. — specifically in junior high and during the first two years of high school through health classes. The primary purpose of this topic is to raise awareness of the changes that this group of students go through both physically as well as emotionally. However, allowing sex education to be compulsorily taught in schools has become an extremely controversial topic all across the country. There have been countless amounts of never ending debates and arguments by the American public who are for and against it strongly. Statistics have shown that more than 50% of American teenagers lose their virginity before the age of seventeen and only 7% of American parents accept the concept of sex education in schools without a problem. On the other hand, most of remaining 93% of the parent population consider it a restricted and too " mature" of a topic to be discussing with their children. However, according to Buzzle, an online blog, it is not the presence of sex education in schools, but its absence that has made teen pregnancy increase to such a high level today. 2 Buzzle believes that most of the schools that do provide sex education have an " abstinence is the best solution" approach to it. Abstinence is the only form of birth control that is 100% effective against both pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. It is the practice of refraining from one or all aspects of sexual activity for medical, psychological, social, legal, philosophical or religious reasons. The concept of abstinence, conveyed by sex education classes, works well with

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students because we all believe that prevention is better than cure. Also considering the age group receiving this education, it can be well assumed that students are not completely matured either physically or mentally to make decisions regarding their sexuality and its desires. Therefore, stressing the importance of restraint and abstinence through sex education is a great advantage for both their mental and physical health. Although most schools prefer to use the “ abstinence” approach to promote or prevent sexual interactions between teenagers, some of them actually have accepted the fact that a simple class taken at school will not prevent “ hormone-raging” and rebellious teens from having any sort of sex. Instead, they have chosen to use the “ safe-sex” approach. This approach primarily teaches students about different types of birth control contraceptives available for use to practice safe sex. This is one of the most important concepts that this curriculum probably contains. With the access to the Internet, information is easy to obtain on various topics including sex. However, not everything read on the Internet is valid. There are several myths about sex — pregnancy and disease prevention circulating around the Internet and in between teens, maybe even adult crowds that is not legitimate factual information. Some of the false information may include not being able to become pregnant if the female didn’t have her first menstrual period prior to the sexual intercourse, the “ pullout” method being 100% effective, not being able to get pregnant while menstruating, and etc. This class serves as a purpose to educate students about real facts and effective methods to keep their body in good sexual health. It can elaborate in detail about different birth control methods such as birth control pills and implants, condoms, diaphragms, spermicides, sponges, shots, and even information about the Morning-After pill

(emergency contraceptive.) These methods will and have been preventing pregnancy. Also, condoms specifically have been protecting sexually active individuals from STD's and STI's. In addition to gaining knowledge about abstinence and different birth control contraceptives, sex education classes also provide a wealth of information about sexually transmitted diseases and infections and different terminology related to it. This concept not only discusses the life threats linked to these infections but it also educates and prepares students for future biological science or anatomy classes while pursuing higher education. STD's and STI's such as genital herpes, chlamydia (crabs), syphilis, gonorrhea, UTI's (urinary tract infection), hepatitis B and C, scabies, vaginal and yeast infections, and even HIV and AIDS are on a rise compared to the last few decades. Sex education classes in general are designed to teach the deadly effects of these infections on people. Students learn about signs and symptoms along with complications that include death regarding these infections. According to Buzzle. com once again, " The grave dangers that these diseases pose to them, the physical and mental torture that they may have to go through if they fall prey to an STD, not to mention the social stigma associated with them, are well explained. " 2 The intention is to raise awareness of the consequences they can expect to face if they don't act responsibly. On the other side of the argument, even though sex education may seem like the most advantageous type of instruction that students can receive, it definitely has some negative effects linked to it. One of the main reasons that people opposed to it have is its nature of misinterpretation. As I mentioned in one of the previous paragraphs, students receiving this education are usually young and not fully mature. It is highly likely that they can misinterpret the " safe-

sex" approach as an OK to have intercourse at the wrong age when they are neither mentally nor emotionally ready. Also, learning about the ultimate topic this class focuses on — 'sex' can trigger curiosity in young minds. This often provokes foolish behavior involving breaking the safety rules of prevention and control that the course advises not to. Not only can students misinterpret the information given during education classes but it can also be misinterpreted by uninformed or poorly informed teachers who have very little or no knowledge in this field. There is a possibility that the instructor can also insert his/her own values and beliefs into the lesson and make it more biased than based on actual facts. Most of these classes are taught in a short period of time. A semester worth of sex education is not enough to understand and learn intensified material. Therefore, in addition to the biased material taught, some students are left with unanswered questions in their minds that will lead to curiosity once again. Instead of preventing sexual behaviors, according to the article on Essortment.com, these classes will be pushing curious students towards it. Schools that practice the "safe-sex" approach in their sex education classes usually have several religious oppositions. They do not believe in the idea of pre-marital sex, whether it is practiced in a safe way or not. The idea of schools teaching Christian students to practice sex safely before marriage offends and infuriates religious parents and guardians in a major way. Beliefs about sex are ultimately shaped by religion, and abstinence is a key component to Christianity. According to Education.com, " Many supporters of abstinence education are Christian, critics believe teaching chastity in the classroom for moral reasons is a violation of the separation of church and state. " In addition to that, instructors who are religious can also imbed their beliefs

into the curriculum again, altering factual information. After performing research and studying both sides of the debate, I personally believe that sex education should be mandatory in all schools. Not a lot of parents have or will take a chance and time to have an open discussion with their children about sex. Fortunately, sex education courses through the school system can make that possible. These courses help teenagers going through adolescence understand their body's biological process and help them deal with it. It also raises awareness about abstinence and the practice of safe sex with numerous different options to choose from. In addition to that, these courses educate students so they can protect themselves from the dangerous sexually transmitted diseases and infections from spreading around the community. Speaking from personal experience, I myself was benefited greatly from taking this course. It taught me a few concepts that I was never aware of and is useful on a daily basis. In my opinion, these classes are designed to enhance the well being of a fast growing generation — and that to me is the biggest gift of knowledge that I am fortunate to take advantage of. Works cited: 1. " Abstinence Education: Weighing Pros and Cons (page 2)." Abstinence Education: Weighing Pros and Cons. Web. 21 Nov. 2012. . 2. " Health Education: Sex Education- STD's and AID's." Health Education: Sex Education- STD's and AID's. Web. 21 Nov. 2012. < http://sitemaker.umich.edu/mendez.356/sex_education-_std_s_and_aid_s_> 3. Iyer, Sujata. " Sex Education in Schools Pros and Cons." Buzzle. com. Buzzle. com, 06 Jan. 2012. Web. 20 Nov. 2012. . 4. " Pros And Cons Of Sex Education In School." Essortment. Web. 21 Nov. 2012. . 5. ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, Web. 20 Nov. 2012. . 6. " Sex Education Pros and Cons." Sex Education Pros & Cons. Web. 21 Nov. 2012. . 7. " Stay Teen | Myth vs. Fact." <https://assignbuster.com/naveena-chittineedi/>

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