



**National Coalition
of STD Directors**

Unpacking "Parental Rights" Policies

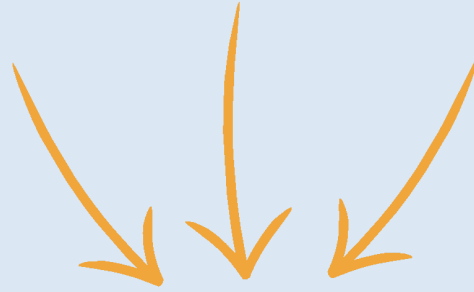
The What:

In 2023, over 80 "parents' rights" bills were introduced and debated across state legislatures; some of them have or could become law. How are state policymakers defining parental rights and how does it impact adolescent sexual health?

The How:

In this resource guide, you will learn how parental rights policies are 1) defined; 2) geographically distributed across the U.S. and co-packaged with other policy goals; and 3) can be reconsidered by educating policymakers on evidence-based practices that prioritize adolescent safety.

How are parental rights defined?



Definitions vary by proposed policy. NCSD did a policy language scan of 2023 proposed legislation and found the common phrases adopted by many lawmakers define parental rights as the right to...

- 1) "be notified of curriculum pertaining to human sexuality." *32 bills
- 2) "direct the education of the minor." *57 bills
- 3) "opt minors out of any 'objectionable' curriculum." *62 bills
- 4) "increase involvement in public schools' sexuality education." *18 bills

HB1738 - Ark.

Allow parents to remove children from classes where "controversial viewpoints" are discussed, including that someone is privileged based on race. Passed House committee.

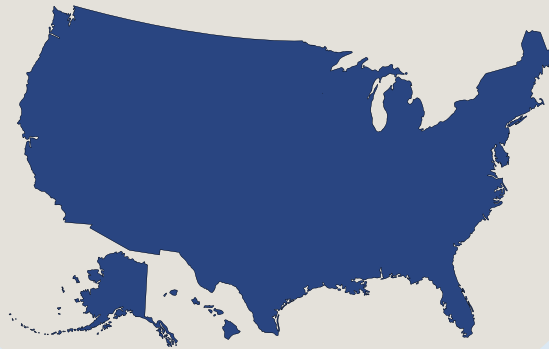
SF496 - Iowa

Prohibits instruction related to gender identity/sexual orientation. Allows parents to be notified if school believes their child is identifying with a gender different from their sex assigned at birth. Passed both the state House and Senate; Governor expected to sign.

H.R. 5 - U.S.

Federal legislation that would codify parental rights, including inspection of books and advance notice prior to mental health screenings. Passed the House, 213-208.

Where are parental rights bills happening & what's included in them?



SB150 - Ky.

Requires notification from schools for "sexuality education." Limits minor confidentiality for services. Protects teachers who do not use students' correct pronouns if different than sex assigned at birth. Vetoed by the Governor, but veto was overridden.

SB131 - Okla.

Authorizes parents to file a civil action against a person for violation of parental rights. Still in committee.

HB3197 - S.C.

Requires seven days' notification for any sexuality education in order to allow parents to opt out. Still in committee.

HB105 - Alaska

Require parents to be notified about and able to withdraw students from curriculum they deem inappropriate. Also would require that locker rooms in schools are divided by sex assigned at birth. In committee hearing.

HB137 - Mo.

Would increase parental notifications of curriculum for anything related to sexual orientation/gender identity, even outside the scope of human sexuality courses. Still in committee.

What can I do to help educate lawmakers?

There are several ways state agencies, parents, teachers, and other organizations can educate lawmakers about the impact of parental rights legislation.

01 Talk about parental inclusion.



Youth consenting to services or taking courses does not usurp parents' authority. Parents can stay engaged in minors' education and care while supporting laws that respect teachers' expertise and protect minors experiencing sexual abuse.

02 Amplify supportive parents' and their kids' voices.



Build a coalition of parents and youth who support family & LGBTQ inclusion in education while recognizing the need for comprehensive services.

03 Testify and share your story.



Testifying at a committee in many states isn't subject to lobbying laws. Confirm your state rules and share stories and facts when parental rights are proposed.

04 Cite research and evidence.



Talking points should include the facts. Research has shown that youth value confidentiality and are more likely to seek care when protections are implemented.



Questions? Email us:
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