

Key Facts

That Parents Need to Know

- ◆ **Our nation’s K-12 public schools are coming under increasing amounts of political pressure from national homosexual-advocacy groups.** This pressure often comes in the form of demands to create a “safe environment” for gay and lesbian students. Schools are told that if they do not ban “homophobic” and “anti-LGBT” (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) messages—as well as include positive statements about homosexuality in their policies, curriculum, books and during special events like the Day of Silence—they will face legal liability.

However there is another side to the story that parents and schools need to know. Such as the fact that...

- ◆ **Messages promoting homosexuality in public schools create complicated legal dilemmas.** When school officials allow outside groups to introduce politicized messages about homosexuality on publicly-funded campuses, they may unknowingly wade into a legal quagmire with liability risks on all sides.
- ◆ **Events and materials touted by outside groups as “safety” or “diversity” initiatives all too often cross the line into the promotion of a political agenda—and worse, an open attack on students’ individually held religious convictions.** As a result, schools have much more risk of violating First Amendment rights and viewpoint discrimination prohibitions.
- ◆ **Gay-advocacy groups like GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) make an unprincipled argument when they pressure schools to censor ex-gay or post-gay messages.** Materials and events being marketed to schools by homosexual advocacy groups often make negative or biased statements about particular denominations and religions, while at the same time seeking to shut out opposing viewpoints. Not only is this an unprincipled approach, but it is legally incorrect.
- ◆ **This one-sided agenda is also irresponsible, and even dangerous, from a psychological and emotional perspective.** For instance, we know from scientific data that many children, starting at age 12, are unsure about their sexual identity. Many of them don’t even solidify their sexual identity until age 17 or 18. (For more information, review the social data provided on this Web site, www.truetolerance.org.) Clearly, the middle and high school years are a crucial and vulnerable time for children who are developing in many ways. So schools certainly shouldn’t be opening their doors to messages that push children into prematurely embracing a sexual identity based on the demands of outside advocacy groups.
- ◆ **The U.S. Constitution protects free speech, including differing points of view about homosexuality.** The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly stated that public schools cannot restrict speech simply because it may be perceived by some as controversial or because the speaker or writer may happen to have a religious perspective.
- ◆ **Therefore, if schools do choose to address the issue of homosexuality, they should make a good-conscious effort to provide a balanced presentation.** Contradictory to gay advocacy groups’ assertions otherwise, the debate has not been settled on complex questions about how people become gay and whether or not they can change their sexual orientation.