
THE TISL TIMES

The Official Newsletter of the 45th General Assembly

Today's Schedule

12:00 Orientation

1:00 Joint Session

2:00 Committee Meetings

3:30 First Legislative Session

4:30: Adjourn



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Let's Talk about Sex

Bill Proposes Revisions to Tennessee's Sex. Ed. Program

Did your sexual education teacher in high school ever mention oral sex? Protection? If so, your parents could potentially sue them for promoting "gateway sexual conduct," provided the teacher was hired from an outside institution and not a full-time employee of the school.



In May of 2012, Governor Bill Haslam signed into law the "Gateway to Sexual Activity" bill, prohibiting teachers from discussing any subject in sexual education that could potentially lead to intercourse.

Activities included are "touching of gateway body parts, such as genitals, buttock, breasts, and the inner thigh," as paraphrased by David Fowler, president of the Family Action Council of Tennessee. The law was intended to promote Tennessee's abstinence-only sexual education programming, in addition to discouraging birth control methods in favor of refraining from sexual activities.

Several legislators this weekend propose to make changes to Tennessee's current sexual education laws, starting with repealing the "Gateway to Sexual Activity" law.

continued on page 2

Opening Session: A Call to Make a Difference

Quick, simple, short, sweet, and to the point is what the opening session of the 45th General Assembly was like since it lasted about thirty minutes in all. With thirty-nine schools were present for the three speakers, who all spoke about making a difference.

The State of Judiciary was given by Chief Justice Samuel Adkisson, who reminded delegates of this weekend's motto, "You're being leaders of tomorrow by serving today. The future belongs to those who lead."

Governor Jamie Arnett gave the State of TISL, and expressed that, "TISL has reached the next level" because of the delegates sitting in the room. She challenged delegates to, "stand up for what you believe in and do what you think is right, handle confrontation with dignity and grace."

Finally, the feature Speaker Secretary of State Tre Hargett shared his loved for TISL and the many life-long relationships he gained. He challenged delegates to reach beyond themselves, "to improve this state and the others around you."

Seems like the theme of making a difference is at the forefront of the TISL 45th General Assembly, and that is just what these schools are here for.

-Cassie Richardson



continued from page 1

Bill 19 – An Act to Repeal Gateway To Sexual Activities Law, primarily sponsored by Senator Tyler Marlin and Representative Katie Fuselier from Vanderbilt University, cites Tennessee teens' decision to have sex without adequate contraceptive measures, as well as correlations between lower teenage pregnancy rates and more balanced approaches to sexual education in other states such as Massachusetts and Vermont, as reason to repeal the "Gateway to Sexual Activities" law.

Bill 85 – An Act to Amend Tennessee Code Annotated Section 49-6-1304 to Allow Comprehensive Sexual Education in Tennessee Public Schools, primarily sponsored by Senator Megan Singer and Representative Jess Wilder, both of Rhodes College, also attempts to reform Tennessee sexual education through the removal of the "Gateway" law. The bill directly addresses concerns of the legislators of the original "Gateway to Sexual Activity" law, stating "Whereas, comprehensive sex education programs have been proven to not have adverse effects such as increasing the likelihood of becoming sexually active or negative sexual health consequences."

As of this afternoon, Bill 19 passed through the Education I committee with approval, and Bill 85 will be addressed in Education II.

-Page Forrest