



WASHINGTON REF 90

Tips for Effective Letters to the Editor



DO:

- **Keep it brief.** Shoot for 200-400 words. Many papers have a specific word count limit you will want to honor. Streamline your message and stick to one or two main points.
- **Lead with a bold, attention grabbing statement.** Which intro is more compelling: “Dear editors, I am writing to say we must Reject R-90” OR “Legislators think they know how to raise your children better than you do”?
- **Appeal to emotion with facts.** Invite the audience to feel the point you are trying to make without coming across as emotionally unhinged. The curriculum examples and rejected amendments speak for themselves—just state facts.
- **When possible, connect your letter to something recently published in the paper.** Your odds at publication increase dramatically if your letter is relevant to recent news or an op-ed.
- **Always include a call to action.** Give people a specific action step they can take to help—share your letter, encourage family and friends to vote Reject R-90.
- **Make every word count.** After drafting your letter, go through and remove every word that is not critically important. “I think” statements aren’t necessary.

DON'T:

- **Insult everyone and their mother or come across as angry.** Fight with truth, not rage.
- **Forget that the entire objective is to get voters to Reject Ref-90.** Remember to bring everything back to the importance of rejecting Ref-90.

PHRASES TO CONSIDER INCLUDING:

- Mandated CSE removes control from local school boards and parents.
- CSE is neither age appropriate nor medically accurate.
- CSE represents a shift from reproductive to sexuality education.
- How do you opt out of the social change created by sexuality education?
- Why have the media refused to print curriculum examples?

Ref 90 Talking Points

Loss of Local Control

- Mandated CSE means a one-size fits all approach that removes control from local school boards and the parents who elect them.
- The requirements in SB 5395 were determined by 16 unelected members of a work group.

Limited Curriculum Choice

- Because CSE curricula contain the same objectionable elements, it's not a true choice.
- Districts are prevented from using a more acceptable risk avoidance curriculum.
- Because SB 5395 is an unfunded mandate, a district would have to develop another curriculum at their own expense. One district estimated that cost to be \$232,000.

CSE is Not Age Appropriate

Curricula Examples:

- Kindergarten lesson talks about “a very sensitive area at the top called the clitoris.” *3 Rs*
- Suggests to 7th graders that bathing together and mutual masturbation are ways to build intimacy while avoiding STDs. *3 Rs*

CSE is Not Medically Accurate

Curricula Examples:

- Tells kids external condoms are safe for anal sex, even though they're not FDA approved. *FLASH*
- Leads students to believe emergency contraception is still effective on day 5. *FLASH*
- Tells children that a doctor assigns a sex to them at birth. *All*

There is No True Opt-Out

- Children cannot be opted out of schoolyard discussions and the culture change that takes place at school. It was discovered students at one middle school were playing “games” including “Molest Me Mondays” after starting a new CSE curriculum. *Shaw MS, Spokane*
- Girls at another school described being grabbed by boys in the halls and said that kids who are opted out “get teased and bullied even more.” *Curtis Jr. High, University Place*
- Some curriculum exercises tell students to share information from the lesson with their friends. *3 Rs*

CSE Can Be Integrated Into Other Classes

- Though the legislature said it was not their intent for CSE to be integrated into other classes, there is nothing to prevent it. In fact, OSPI's Sexual Health Education Program Supervisor said CSE should be integrated. An amendment to prevent integration was voted down.

CSE Doesn't Provide Students With Complete Information

CSE lessons repeatedly give students partial information including:

- Telling them the pull-out method is free, always available, and works better than most people think, without disclosing the 22% failure rate. *FLASH*
- Fails to give failure rates and risks of birth control. *FLASH*
- Discusses anal and oral sex without including the associated risks. *FLASH, 3 Rs*
- Discusses porn without including studies that show its harm. *3 Rs*

Citizens Don't Want CSE

- 58% of respondents in OSPI's own survey said no to CSE.
- FOIA records reveal 21,668 calls to the legislature against SB5395 and 191 in favor.

Undermines Parental Authority

Students are repeatedly told that they can receive birth control, abortions, and STD testing without parental knowledge and are encouraged to talk to teachers and other "trusted adults."