

The Washington Times

www.washingtontimes.com

Forum: Better health for teens

Published January 7, 2007

This is a short research and data piece that proves that abstinence leads to the best health for our teens and best cost saving education for our nation. There is so much more that could have been added, but I hope this helps to save abstinence funding.

Bottom line: Abstinence saves taxpayers millions. Annual taxpayers' savings comes to \$6.9 billion since abstinence education has been funded for teenagers nationwide. The annual cost of a child born to a mother 17 years old or younger is \$4,080.

Since 1991, when federal abstinence funding began, births to 15-17 year olds have dropped 43 percent despite a 25 percent increase in that age group. Only 40 percent of teen mothers graduate from high school and only 2 percent complete college by age 30.

Sons born to adolescent mothers are 2.2 times more likely to be incarcerated. The Centers for Disease Control attribute 67 percent of teen birth reductions to fewer teens being sexually active (known as abstinence). ("By the Numbers: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing," The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2006)

Virginity pledges improve life outcomes for teens: Two thirds are less likely to experience teen pregnancy. Seventy percent are still virgins by age 18 compared to 37 percent of nonpledgers. One-third less are likely to give birth as teens or young adults. Fifty percent are less likely to give birth out of wedlock.

Seventeen percent of pledgers had unprotected sex compared to 28 percent of nonpledgers. Fifty-three percent of pledgers had sexual intercourse between ages 19-25 compared with 87 percent of nonpledgers. (Abstinence funding should be expanded to single, college-age young adults.) Pledgers were 12 times more likely to be virgins on their wedding night.

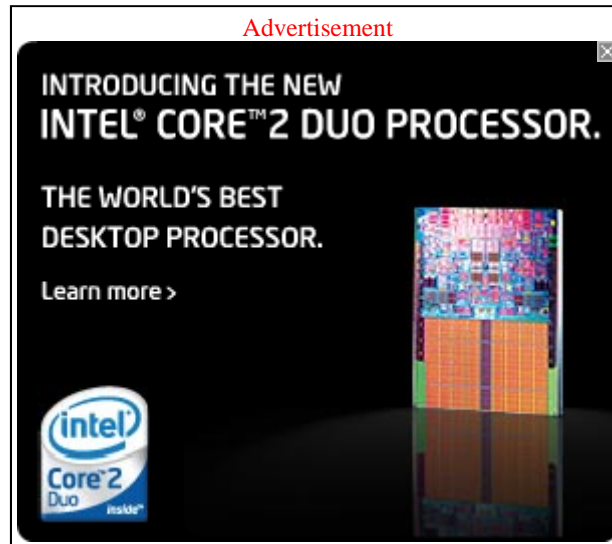
There were *no negative* risk factors associated with virginity pledges. (National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Healthy, 2004, research done by Robert Rector and Kirk Johnson, Heritage Foundation)

Health risks to teens who become sexually active:

Sexually active teens have increased teen pregnancies, abortions and sexually transmitted diseases that can lead to infertility, genital cancers and death. (CDC, 2004).

Teens who have abortions experience elevated rates of suicide, depression, substance abuse, anxiety and other mental health problems. ("The Duty to Screen: Clinical, Legal and Ethical Implications of Predictive Risk Factors of Post-Abortive Maladjustment," The Journal of Contemporary Health and Law and Policy, Winter, 2003; 33-144).

Sexually active females are 3 times more likely and males are 8 times likelier to attempt



suicide. Suicide rates have doubled in 40 years. ("Sexually Active Teenagers Are More Likely to Be Depressed and To Attempt Suicide," Robert Rector, Kirk Johnson, Ph.D. Lauren Noves, June 2, 2003).

Sexually active girls are depressed all, most or a lot of the time and have 3 times greater depression rates than abstinent girls.

Sexually active boys are twice as likely to be depressed as abstinent boys.

Sexually active females are 5 times more likely to be victimized by dating violence than girls who are abstinent.(www.webmd.com, Aug. 2, 2004, Pediatrics, August 2004)

Sexually active teens are much more likely to take drugs and drink alcohol. (Columbia Univ. National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 2004).

PAM MULLARKEY

Founder of Project SOS, Inc. (Strengthening Our Students). Jacksonville, Fla.

Copyright © 2007 News World Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.

[Return to the article](#)



[Want to use this article? Click here for options!](#)

Copyright The Washington Times .