

# Interfaith IMPACT of New York State

646 STATE STREET, ALBANY, NY 12203

PHONE: (518) 463-5652

E-MAIL:

[INTERFAITHIMPACTNYS@VERIZON.NET](mailto:INTERFAITHIMPACTNYS@VERIZON.NET)

WEBSITE: [WWW.INTERFAITHIMPACTNYS.ORG](http://WWW.INTERFAITHIMPACTNYS.ORG)

## Board of Directors

Bailey Bloom, President  
DeWitt Ellinwood, Vice President  
Ann Brandon, Secretary  
John E. Keevert, Treasurer  
Julius A. Archibald, Jr.  
Rabbi Bernard Bloom  
The Rev. Dr. Lynn Ashley  
Patricia Crawford  
The Rev. Tom Davis  
Christine Deyss  
The Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert  
Eileen Hamlin  
Ruth S. Klepper  
The Rev. John Magisano  
Damaris McGuire  
The Rev. Dr. Harlan Ratmeyer  
The Rev. Paul Rees-Rohrbacher  
Alan W. Rubenstein  
Ruth Sabo, Ph. D.  
Judy Schwartz  
Barbara Zaron

## Clergy Advisory Board

The Rev. Kaaren Anderson  
The Rev. Kenneth I. Applegate  
Rabbi Henry Bamberger  
The Rev. Johanna Barrett  
The Rev. Ben Bortin  
The Rev. Stephen C. Butler  
The Rev. Dr. Thomas A. Chulak  
The Rev. Steven C. Clunn  
Rabbi Matthew Cutler  
Rabbi Jerome K. Davidson, D.D.  
Rabbi Joshua M. Davidson  
The Rev. Larry A. Deyss  
The Rev. Linda Dolby  
Rabbi Debora S. Gordon  
The Rev. Paula J. Gravelle  
Rabbi Daniel Gropper  
The Rev. Margaret Hart  
Rabbi Alan J. Katz  
The Rev. Naomi King  
Rabbi Lawrence A. Kotok  
The Rev. Robert C. Lamar  
The Rev. Dr. William A. Lasher  
The Rev. Christopher Luedde  
Pastor Alexandra S. Lusak  
Rabbi Linda Motzkin  
The Rev. Dr. Hugh Nevin  
The Rev. Larry Phillips  
Rabbi Daniel Polish  
The Rev. Judith Quarles  
The Very Rev. David Robinson  
Rabbi Jonathan S. Roos  
Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld  
Rabbi Jonathan Rubenstein  
Rabbi Scott Shpeen  
The Rev. Bruce Southworth  
The Rev. Dr. Charles H. Straut, Jr.  
Pastor Scott Taylor  
The Rev. Samuel A. Trumbore  
The Rev. Wade Wheelock  
Rabbi Michael A. White  
The Rev. Robert A. White

## Executive Director

Robb Smith

## INTERFAITH LEADERS SUPPORT PASSAGE OF HEALTHY TEENS ACT

Interfaith IMPACT of New York State, a statewide advocacy organization representing progressive Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, and Reform Jewish congregations, clergy and individuals, strongly supports passage of the Healthy Teens Act in New York State.

The bill referred to as the Healthy Teens Act would establish a grant program within the Department of Health in order to provide needed resources to school districts, BOCES, community-based organizations and school-based health centers to provide effective age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education programs for young people.

The Assembly passed the bill [A.6619b (Gottfried)] on April 3, 2006, by a vote of 126 to 15. As bill S.5121c (Spano), it awaits action in the Senate. The bill was also passed by the Assembly in June 2005, but died in the Senate this past January.

Although 88% of New Yorkers agree that students should have information about contraception and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), New York State has no designated funding stream for comprehensive sex education in schools. New York accepted over \$11 million in federal funds for abstinence-only sex education programs in 2005. Last year our state contributed \$2.6 million to such programs, although they omit crucial information and leave teens vulnerable to the tragic consequences of ignorance about the facts of sexuality. New York State's rates of teen pregnancy and STIs are among the highest in the nation.

Research has shown that giving young people complete and accurate information about sex does not influence them to engage in sexual activity any earlier and does not lead to more frequent or riskier sexual activity. On the contrary, comprehensive sex education helps delay the onset of intercourse, reduce the number of partners and increase the effective use of contraception.

As individuals of faith, we have a duty to help insure that our young people have the information they need to make safe, responsible choices about their sexual health. Financially, socially and ethically, we cannot afford to do otherwise.

On behalf of our member congregations, clergy and individuals of faith across the state, Interfaith IMPACT of NYS urges the New York State Senate not to let the Healthy Teens Act languish and die once again, but to take prompt action to pass this bill, which is of vital importance to the health and wellbeing of our young people.

April 24, 2006

*A statewide coalition of mainstream and progressive religious faiths advocating for social justice and human rights. IINYS includes Protestant, Reform Jewish and Unitarian Universalist congregations and individuals.*