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**MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT FOR
THE HEALTHY TEENS ACT**

New York State has some of the highest rates of teenage venereal disease and pregnancy in the United States. This public health crisis is fueled by ignorance and by an abdication of the State's responsibility to provide age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education in public schools.

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

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. Not only will this Act help prevent pregnancies, but it will also help prevent HIV infections and the spread of venereal diseases.

In 2007, the State of New York stopped accepting federal funds for ineffective abstinence-only programs. Now, New York needs to follow through and fund life-saving, comprehensive sexuality education.

The Healthy Teens Act (A01806A/S3836) establishes a comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education grant program through the Department of Health. It authorizes the commissioner to determine certain topics of instruction and makes provisions for the application of grants. This legislation will help provide our young people with the knowledge and facts they need to safeguard their health.

Interfaith IMPACT of New York State is a statewide organization of congregations and individuals from Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Reform Jewish and other faith traditions. We work for the common good through progressive religious advocacy

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