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Abstinence and the classroom

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TOO OFTEN, our reluctance to provide guidance and information to adolescents leads to sex that "just happens." Sex that "just happens" is by definition unprotected sex. We don't get to decide for young people when they have sex, but we can ensure that they have all of the necessary information and support to be intentional about sexual choices.

Governor Patrick got it right on sex ed, because he understands its goals: to increase abstinence, reduce the incidence of unprotected sex, and reduce the number of sexual partners.

Abstinence-only-until-marriage programs fail to achieve the first goal, and do not even attempt to achieve the other two. Sex education programs that do achieve these goals give a clear message regarding the value of delaying sexual activity, and a clear message that those who are sexually active must always use condoms and other contraceptives.

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