

Resources for Parents and Teens

The following resources are available to help foster authentic, positive communication:

- **Let's Talk About S-E-X: A Guide for Kids 9-12 and Their Parents**
by Sam Gitchel and Lorri Foster. Published by Planned Parenthood Mar Monte with Parent's Guide. Available at most bookstores or from www.bookpeddlers.com
- **Stop, Listen and Talk about Sex: A Toolkit for Promoting Family Communication**
by Family Communication, complete with worksheets and CD-ROMs.
Order from www.toucaned.com/FamilyCommunication
- **The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice**
offers resources for many faith traditions at www.rcrc.org

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Whom Would Jesus Harm?

PROPOSITION 4 AND DANGEROUS POSSIBILITIES

Faith Statements Against Proposition 4

We are commanded to protect our children – and in a loving, gracious world, that would be all God's children, not just our own.

For the third time in recent years, “perfect strangers” have taken it upon themselves to direct the course of family values with or without your consent. Proposition 4 is the third highly dangerous attempt to impose some people's own anti-abortion values on every California family. In an ideal world all children and all parents would be open and direct with one another. But no laws on the books can create family communication, especially in those homes where fear, not love, abides.

Proposition 4 directs that parents or guardians of minor girls must be notified prior to the minor receiving an abortion. Even in the real world, over 85 percent of girls can and do consult their parents. Those who do not tell their parents too often live in abusive homes where such information is extremely risky, especially if the girl has become impregnated by a family member or friend.

Proposition 4 permits an adult other than the parent to be notified but demands that under those circumstances an investigation into the girl's home life be initiated by Child Protective Services (CPS). Such an investigation utterly undermines the ability of a girl to have medical confidentiality and puts her at immediate risk of abuse or worse at the hands of adults who have already done her harm. Girls who cannot tell a parent and now fear the authorities may well be driven to drastic actions such as self-induced or back-alley illegal abortions. The case files from states with such laws are full of such horror stories.

We in the faith community may differ on abortion. We should not differ on making a girl's life worse than it already is. If you love your own daughter and have great understanding and support, remember that this is not universal. Be mindful of the unknown teen who needs your compassion and care every bit as much as does your own child. Let us not do greater harm to those among our state's children who have abusive homes by making their lives even more dangerous than they already are.

You don't need “perfect strangers” interfering in your own family values. Girls without strong, supportive families may not survive such interference.

First – love God's children. Then - do no harm to them. ~ *The Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser, Executive Director*
California Council of Churches IMPACT



For more information, please visit www.churchimpact.org and www.noonprop4.org

Religious Leaders from many faith traditions join in asking you to oppose Proposition 4

One great prophecy of the New Testament foretells of John the Baptist whose presence will “turn the hearts of parents to their children” (Luke 1:17) It is a refrain repeated several times in both old and new testaments. Who among us does not want to love our children and have them trust and respect us in return? Family intimacy and trust, however, must begin at the child’s earliest moments and be nurtured throughout life. No arbitrary mandate can create a healthy family relationship.

In those families where children have no ability to rely on parental support, especially where acts of violence and abuse are too-frequent parts of a child’s experience, any law that adds to a minor’s risk is utterly unacceptable. Proposition 4 requires that minor girls seeking abortion services must have their parents present or notified of the request. The vast majority of teens do tell their parents, but for those who do not - who cannot - Proposition 4 actually endangers them. A girl who is in fear of an abusive parent will trigger a Child Protective Service investigation, the very act of which can enrage an already-abusive parent who may inflict further harm on this embattled teen.

Laws cannot create loving and supportive families. No law should be enacted that can do more harm than good. Proposition 4 is a dangerous step with foreseeable consequences to girls whose lives are already in peril. We may have loving families of our own, but not all young people do, and it should not be our work to make bad situations that much worse. It is unthinkable and immoral that we should pass this law and see harm done as its result.

~ Rev. Ginny Curinga

United Church of Christ, Sacramento CA

Families are the basic human community through which most young people are nurtured and sustained in mutual love, responsibility, and respect. Unfortunately, not all young women grow up in such a supportive environment. It is those young women, coming from families where they are unable, for whatever reason, to go to their parents before seeking an abortion, who will suffer with the passage of Proposition 4. Under the deceptive provisions of this proposed Constitutional amendment, a girl coming from such a family could quickly be mired in a child abuse investigation involving the very parents she was afraid to talk to in the first place. Proposition 4 has been called the most deceptive measure on the California ballot this fall. The need for this kind of law has been wildly exaggerated and should be rejected.

~ Mary Larson

Elder, Presbyterian Church (USA), Redondo Beach CA

Proposition 4 places girls at risk. As a Minister with experience on the Orange County Child Abuse Prevention Council, I have learned that dangers are not only physical, but also psychological and spiritual. As a clergy person, I also know that girls have been assaulted by religious leaders. Girls must have the option to choose, without intimidation by parents or by the church. No law should be enacted that makes dangerous situations at home and in her surroundings even worse. The very real probability that this proposed law will inflict further serious harm on already risky lives makes Proposition 4 highly immoral. No good can ever come from the imposition of other people’s values on vulnerable young lives.

~ Rev. Dr. William Peterson

United Church of Christ, Whittier CA

In all families the care for our children is - or should be - one of the highest priorities. Raising children to understand our love and values begins at birth and is a constant responsibility for parents. “Train children in the right way, and when they are old, they will not stray.” (Proverbs 22:6) That is a lifelong commitment we give to our children. It is not something that can be mandated or created by law.

Proposition 4 imposes a new but dangerous constitutional amendment that inserts the law between a parent and child. By force of threat, it endangers those minors whose parents not only have failed to make a parental commitment to their children but whose actions toward their children may be significantly harmful. If a girl seeks an abortion without her parents because she is realistically afraid of them, Proposition 4 would direct that an immediate investigation of her home life begins, and that is sure to trigger dangerous retaliation by angry, abusive parents against her. No moral society can justify doing greater harm to children than is already being done to them by abusive family situations. Proposition 4 is an ugly, unjustifiable law that endangers vulnerable girls, and it must be rejected.

~ Rev. Dr. Ignacio Castuera

United Methodist Church, Pomona CA

In an ideal world all teens WOULD communicate with their parents, and even in this world most teens DO involve a parent in decisions about pregnancy. But not all teens feel safe telling parents about an unintended pregnancy, especially in the many cases in which a close family member contributed to the pregnancy. These teens may seek out self induced or back-alley abortions rather than be forced to disclose their situation.

Proposition 4 differs from its predecessors by allowing a doctor to notify certain kinds of non-parental adult family members, supposedly protecting the pregnant teen from an abusive parent. But this provision only applies if the pregnant teen submits written documentation of the abusive situation to the doctor, who is then mandated to report the abuse to law enforcement or Child Protective Services. This clearly undermines the confidentiality between doctor and patient that is fundamental to quality health care.

The 48-hour waiting period would make (and is in fact designed to make) timely care impossible for young women who must travel to reach an abortion provider. The consequences would be especially burdensome on pregnant teens who are poor or who live in remote areas; these young women would be forced to miss work or school on account of the waiting period.

We believe strongly that public resources should be devoted to comprehensive sexuality and reproductive health education, not to trying to enforce parental notification and waiting periods. As in the past, the real purpose of this ballot measure is to reduce the availability of abortion services. It is a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

~ Rev. Peter Laarman

Executive Director, Progressive Christians Uniting