

OUTLINE OF HEARING CONDUCTED BY ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
55TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION, MARCH 25, 1969.

Present: Lingenfelter, Webb, Foote, Prince, Swallow, Wilson,
and Tyson.

Chairman Lingenfelter announced to the more than 40 persons who were in attendance that the hearing was being conducted for the purpose of receiving comments on AB 624, a bill that requires parental consent for sex education in public schools. He stated that due to the large number of people who had asked to be heard that he was requesting the remarks to be limited to 3 minutes and that they be confined to non-repetitious material.

Assemblyman Webb, as sponsor of the bill, was asked for any opening comments he wished to make. He said that the bill simply would allow parents to make a choice of whether or not they wished to consent to their children taking part in the sex education program offered in the schools in the hope that this may forestall what may happen in the future.

Chairman Lingenfelter recognized Mr. John Robb from the Washoe County School District who was present with two nurses of the district. It was presented to the committee that the Washoe District has initiated a pilot program of sex education in selected grade groups and schools. He stated that the program is more a health program only a part of which concerns itself with sex matters. It is based upon a program of study provided by the 3-M Company. It consists of a set of transparencies which can be projected upon a screen with suitable comments from the teacher. The nurses attested to the fact that the program seems to answer a vital need of many students whose complete lack of information has created serious problems of health and morale among them.

Mr. Burnell Larson representing the State Department of Education said that this program was thrust upon the department as the result of demands which seem to emanate from a vacuum among parents who do not provide this vital information to their children. He said the Department does not favor having to adopt this program but the pressures put upon it for the service have been such that it is being projected. He introduced Mr. Bert L. Cooper who supported Mr. Larson's remarks and added that the emotional involvement should not prevent the adoption of an antagonism that would obscure the constructive creation of a suitable program.

There followed then the remarks of those who had asked to be heard. The substance of the presentations are contained in the following excerpts.

Dr. John H. DeTar stated that from a medical viewpoint as a specialist in Urology he was exposed daily to the problems of adults who experience illness in their genitals as well as mental difficulties associated therewith. He said that sex education could have the effect of mental mayhem on an individual by placing information in the minds of a child when he is not ready for it and by having it presented by an improperly trained person.

Mrs. Shirley Horsley presented the committee with a set of transparencies depicting the sex organs, body positions and other matter which she said could have devastating effects upon children. She stated that the removal of sex education from parental responsibility in the home and placing it in the schools was a violation of morality and decency.

The church representatives also voiced the objection that the family structure should not be invaded by the impersonal presentations of educators whose responsibility should be confined to the teaching of basic education; not the invasion of the most sacred and cherished basics of the parent-child relationship.

The committee heard all of those who wished to comment and thanked them for their participation. They were then excused from the meeting.

The committee, with all members present, then discussed the bill in detail. It was suggested that the bill be amended to prohibit sex education without reference to parental consent. It was suggested that this would rob the educators of a province they have indicated has been thrust forward for them to meet. Perhaps the better approach would be to establish within the curriculum guidelines that would limit and direct the subject matter and its method of presentation. Assemblyman Foote said that if the bill were amended to prohibit sex education the possible effect might be to ban basic sciences such as biology from the curriculum.

Assemblyman Webb made it clear that he had prepared the bill at the request of many, many parents who were concerned with the trend of educators to usurp family authority. He strongly supported the consent provision of the bill.

Assemblyman Tyson moved that AB 624 be indefinitely postponed. Foote seconded.

Motion passed over the objection of Webb, Swallow and Prince.