

Democrats to cut off abstinence-only funds: Program called "colossal failure"

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Congressional Democrats say they will pull the plug on abstinence-only sex education when a \$50 million grant expires on June 30—a move sparking outrage among social conservative groups.

“As the House works to eliminate abstinence funding, their solution is simple—provide more pills that prevent and abort pregnancies,” said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council. In an e-mail to supporters, Perkins said Democrats are pushing a “radical agenda that few voters expected—or supported—when they propelled the Democrats to power.”

Democrats would still include money for abstinence teaching in schools, but would combine it with comprehensive sex-ed programs that would teach about birth control and other safe-sex methods.

States currently pay for abstinence-only education in public schools by matching \$3 for every \$4 they receive from the federal government. Congress initially approved the Title V funding as a part of welfare reform.

Representative John Dingell (D., Mich.), chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said May 16 that the decision to stop funding wasn’t difficult at all. “Abstinence-only education seems to be a colossal failure,” Dingell said, according to the Associated Press.

Dingell backed that statement by citing a recent study by Mathematica Policy Research Inc. showing that students in four abstinence-only education programs first had sex at about the same age as those not in abstinence programs. –*Religion News Service*