

## **A Letter from 107 Massachusetts Faith Leaders on the Healthy Youth Act**

Members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives,

As faith leaders in Massachusetts, we affirm a person's dignity, autonomy, and freedom to make their own decisions about their body and reproductive health. In accordance with our moral convictions and personal faiths, we endorse the Healthy Youth Act, which will ensure that all sex education taught by Massachusetts public schools is age appropriate, medically accurate, consent-based, and actively inclusive of LGBTQIA students. We call on the Massachusetts Legislature and Governor Baker to safeguard bodily autonomy, public health, and religious freedom by passing this vital proposal.

We believe that every young person has the right to understand how their body works, to have their identity affirmed, and to learn how best to respect their own and each other's bodily autonomy. This right should not be restricted by elected officials or dictated by another person's religious principles. As faith leaders, we are called to declare our support for comprehensive sexual health education as a basic matter of human rights and religious freedom. Moreover, our faith calls us to love and support each individual's unique journey and well-being.

The quality sexual health education detailed in the Healthy Youth Act recognizes that healthy relationships are a core aspect of well-being. Teaching young people about healthy relationships, boundaries, and consent in an age-appropriate manner helps foster relational success. As young people grow up and begin to enter into more relationships of differing kinds, it is necessary that they have the education and tools to achieve these healthy relationships. This bill has the potential to help young people recognize and address harmful relationships. Educating on healthy relationships and consent specifically, starting at a young age, will ensure that more people have the tools they need to build and sustain healthy relationships over their lifespan. This specific type of education can also help prevent relational trauma, which is far too prevalent. Furthermore, we recognize that sex is a normal human behavior and that educating young people about their bodies is a matter of health and safety.

Massachusetts has a long history of valuing and protecting the dignity of all people. As faith leaders, our religious traditions share a common belief in loving our neighbors and treating one another with dignity and respect. We must raise our voices in support of comprehensive, medically accurate, age-appropriate, and LGBTQIA-affirming sex ed. We encourage our fellow faith leaders and all people of faith to join us in this public commitment to dignity, health, justice, and religious freedom for all people in Massachusetts.

Signed,

Rabbi Leora Abelson  
Rabbi Alison Adler  
Rabbi Katy Allen  
Rabbi Thomas Alpert  
Reverend Elizabeth Assenza  
Reverend Emelia Attridge  
Reverend Harold Babcock

Reverend Dr. Tess Baumberger  
Rabbi Laura Bellows  
Reverend Megan Berkowitz  
Rabbi Daniel Berman  
Rabbi Joshua Breindel  
Reverend Tricia Brennan  
Rabbi Cari Bricklin-Small

Cantor Vera Broekhuysen  
Reverend Elizabeth Bukey  
Reverend Richard Burden  
Reverend Matthew Carriker  
Reverend Evin Carvill Ziemer  
Reverend Melissa Carvill Ziemer  
Reverend Rebecca Cho  
Reverend Frank Clarkson  
Rabbi Shahar Colt  
Reverend Heather Concannon  
Reverend Shelly Davis  
Reverend Nathan Detering  
Reverend Michael Duda  
Martha Durkee-Neuman  
Greg Epstein  
Reverend Dr. Anita Farber-Robertson  
Reverend Shawn Fiedler  
Reverend Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray  
Rabbi Lev Friedman  
Rabbi Shoshana Friedman  
Reverend Katherine Froehlich  
Reverend Kali Fyre  
Rabbi Carol Glass  
Rabbi Debra Goldstein  
Reverend Annie Gonzalez  
Reverend Laurel Gray  
Reverend Dr. Clyde Grubbs  
Rabbi Jen Gubitz  
Reverend Dr. Susanne Intriligator  
Reverend Adam Isbitsky  
Rabbi Shulamit Izen  
Rabbi Eliana Jacobowitz  
Rabbi Suzie Jacobson  
Reverend Greg Johnston  
Rabbi Randy Kafka  
Rabbi Claudia Kreiman  
Reverend Dr. Cynthia Landrum  
Rabbi Karen Landy  
Rabbi David Lerner  
Rabbi Daniel Liben  
Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal  
Reverend Joanna Lubkin  
Rabbi Audrey Marcus Berkman  
Rabbi Natan Margalit  
Reverend Anne Mason  
Reverend Dr. Stephanie May  
Reverend Megan McDermott

Reverend Arthur McDonald  
Reverend Kathleen McTigue  
Reverend Jeffrey Mello  
Matt Meyer  
Rabbi Mimi Micner  
Rabbi Carol Mitchell  
Rabbi Jim Morgan  
Reverend Amo Ngoepe  
Reverend Elizabeth Nguyen  
Reverend Amy Norton  
Reverend Otto O'Connor  
Reverend Aaron Payson  
Reverend Hank Peirce  
Reverend Lisa Perry-Wood  
Rabbi Louis Polisson  
Reverend Laura Randall  
Reverend Kenneth Reeves  
Rabbi Victor Reinstein  
Rabbi Michael Rothbaum  
Martha Schick  
Reverend Katherine Schofield  
Reverend Catie Scudera  
Reverend Catherine Senghas  
Rabbi Rachel Silverman  
Rabbi Becky Silverstein  
Reverend Fred Small  
Rabbi Robin Sparr  
Rabbi Toba Spitzer  
Rabbi Talia Stein  
Rabbi Keith Stern  
Reverend Aaron Stockwell  
Cantor Jodi Sufrin  
Rabbi Andrew Vogel  
Reverend Lisa Ward  
Reverend Liz Weber  
Rabbi Alex Weissman  
Reverend Dr. Donald Wells  
Rabbi R.G. Wilson-Lyons  
Rabbi Elyse Winick  
William Wolfskill  
Rabbi Julie Wolkoff  
Jessica Young Chang  
Reverend Joseph Zarro  
Rabbi Henry Zoom