

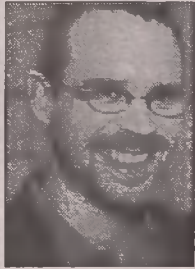
## House gives final OK to sex ed bill

Respect for 'committed relationships' removed

by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

A bill that would replace North Carolina's abstinence-until-marriage sex education curriculum with a more comprehensive sex ed approach passed 62-52 the House in its third and reading on April 16.

Supporters of the Healthy Youth Act (HB 88) say a more inclusive and effective "abstinence-based comprehensive sexuality health education" is a better fit for Tar Heel school children in grades 7-9.



The bill has become a hot button issue across the state. Opponents and conservative groups say the measure could destroy respect for "traditional marriage." The bill had instructed school districts to teach students respect for marriage and "long-term committed relationships." It was amended to remove the latter phrase.

The amendment, offered by Democratic Whip Rep. Bruce Goforth, was meant to make the measure less controversial. Conservative groups, including the Family Policy Council and Christian Action League, had said inclu-

sion of respect for long-term committed relationships would open the possibility of teaching students about homosexuality.

Some representatives said such amendments weakened the bill.

"Comprehensive sex education is based on biology, not some ideological, political agenda," Rep. Earl Jones (D-Guilford) said, according to *The News & Record*.

Despite the removal of the committed relationship language, EqualityNC Executive Director Ian Palmquist (pictured) told *Q-Notes* he believes the bill remains the right choice for school children.

"Some compromises had to be made to get it through the House," he said. "It's certainly not perfect and not everything we wanted but we do believe it is still an important step forward in providing kids accurate information to protect themselves."

Palmquist said polls and experiences from counties with comprehensive sex ed curricula show that most parents will choose a comprehensive option if it is available.

EqualityNC has signed on to support the bill with several youth and health organizations across the state.

Palmquist said "a lot of work" remains to see the bill passed in the Senate. "It is possible," he said.

At press time, the Senate had yet to take any action on the bill. ▀

## TOY honored with national counseling award

Organization plans May 5 arts celebration

CHARLOTTE — Time Out Youth, a local LGBT youth support and social organization, has been presented a national award honoring LGBT counseling.

The 2009 Joe Norton Award for Outstanding Contribution to the LGBT Community was presented by the Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC). It was presented at the conference of the American Counseling Association, held in Charlotte in late March.

Time Out Youth CEO Steve Bentley said the award came with a \$300 financial contribution. The award is named after ALGBTIC's founder.

Bentley said the organization is excited about the hire of former intern Laurie Pitts. Her employment with the agency increases part-time staff from two to three. Bentley said increased staff numbers mean increased services and more availability for LGBT youth in need.

The group will hold its annual fundraiser, A Celebration of the Arts, on May 5 at Theatre Charlotte, 501 Queens Rd. A silent auction begins at 7 p.m. The arts show

begins at 7:30 p.m.

Some of this year's performers include The Chuckleheads, The Gay Men's Chorus of Charlotte, The Charlotte Community



Three of four Time Out Youth Board of Director youth members and the ALGBTIC national award. l-r: Izel Posada, James Medlin, Donnell Beaty.

Drummers, Susan Roberts Knowlson, Robbie Jaeger, Viscera Dance Theatre and others.

Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door, and can be bought by calling Time Out Youth at 704-344-8335 or online at [www.acelebrationofthearts.com](http://www.acelebrationofthearts.com). ▀

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Calendar

<p><u>MONDAYS</u></p> <p>Knockdown Drag Out! Open Drag Contest at 12 Midnight Hosted by Morgan Richards</p> <p><u>WEDNESDAYS</u></p> <p>Game Night with Bingo &amp; Other Games Hosted by Bimbos of the Beach</p> <p><u>THURSDAYS</u></p> <p>Customer Appreciation Night. Free pool! Disco Diva Show at 12 Midnight</p>	<p><u>FRIDAYS &amp; SATURDAYS</u></p> <p>Fri., May 8 Isabella Diamante with Kristina DeeVine</p> <p>Sat., May 9 Isabella Diamante &amp; Dance Party</p> <p>Fri., May 15 Coti Collins</p> <p>Sat., May 16 Vicki</p> <p>Fri., May 22 Petite de Jonville. Imani Tate, Morgan Richards</p> <p>Sat., May 23 Pride Show from Columbia</p>
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