

The Public Affairs Pulse

Keeping You on Top of Legislative & Advocacy Issues

Teen Advocates Learn to Lobby by Staci Rickman

On Tuesday, May 20, two PPWNM Peer Leaders attended YELL (Youth Educating Legislators in Lansing) student lobby day. Over 70 youth leaders from Planned Parenthood Peer Education programs across the state also attended. Grand Rapids Peer Leaders Andrea Hennes, a junior attending City High School, and Ellie Grossman, a senior at Wyoming High School met with Representatives Brandon Dillon and Winnie Brinks.



Pictured above: Planned Parenthood Something to Say group meeting with Rep. Winnie Brinks (D - 76)

During their lobby visits, Ellie and Andrea discussed issues that are important to them, challenges they face in their community, and shared stories that related the experiences of real teens within the Grand Rapids area. They emphasized the impact that social media has on teen dating relationships and provided examples of the ways that teens use social

media for teen dating violence, such as trying to control who your partner talks to on Facebook and which pictures they are allowed to post on their wall.

“It’s really scary”, said Ellie, “teens have no idea what healthy relationships are supposed to look like and aren’t able to identify the red flags of unhealthy relationships. They think it’s healthy to control who your partner talks to; they think it’s a sign of love.”

The teens also talked to their Representatives about House Bill 4721, which would mandate medically accurate, comprehensive sexuality education in the state of Michigan. The Representatives told the youth that the bill would likely stay in committee unless there was a change in power within the legislature and the education committee. However, both Representatives offered to reach out to their contacts on the Grand Rapids Public Schools School Board (GRPS) to encourage them to reconvene their sex ed advisory committee (SEAC) and urge the committee to change the school’s sexuality education policy to comprehensive sexuality education instead of abstinence-only.

This would be a great accomplishment as the GRPS SEAC has not been in many years. PPWNM salutes Ellie and Andrea for their professionalism and ability to convincingly present their case for the importance of comprehensive sexuality education for teens! Both

Representatives stated that they were impressed with the youth and greatly appreciated their willingness to share their stories.

“MI Women Are Watching” Campaign Comes to West MI

In April, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Michigan (PPAM) has launched a voter education program known as MI Women are Watching. This campaign aims to inform Planned Parenthood Supporters about the voting records of their elected officials on key issues relating to women’s health.

In June, the MI Women are Watching Campaign will move to Grand Rapids and Muskegon with television ads, a social media campaign, mail pieces, phone calls and a two-week long door-to-door canvass.

In addition to the above program components, PPAM will be hosting 2 volunteer canvass days in June.

Grand Rapids: Tues., June 24,
12 – 8pm

Muskegon: Sat., June 28 10am – 6pm
If you are interested in volunteering,
please email:

jenny.kinne@ppmchoice.org

To sign up to learn more
about the MI Women Are Watching
Campaign, visit:
<http://www.miplannedparenthood.org/miwaw2014>