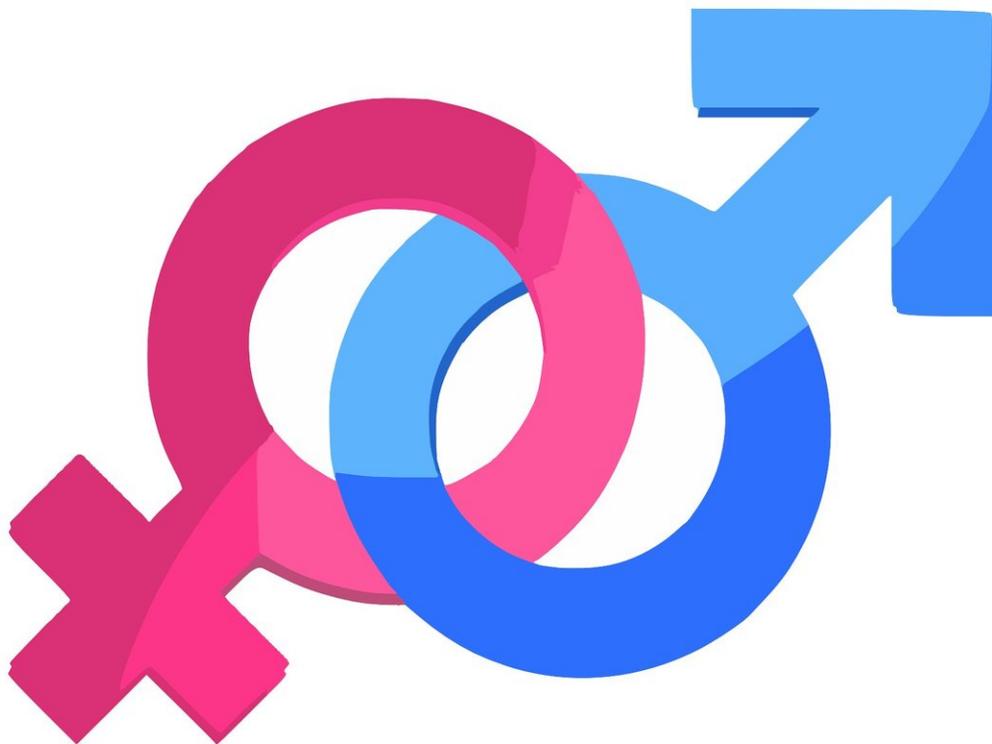


Both Democrat and Republican likely voters strongly support sex education in schools

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Democrats and Republicans disagree on many policies but not on sex education for teenagers, a Rutgers-led national survey finds.

The study, published in the journal *Sex Education*, surveyed close to 1,000 likely voters who identified as Democrats or Republicans. The findings show a strong majority of them support sex education within schools and the continued funding by the government for teenage pregnancy prevention programs that include information about both abstinence and contraception.

"Sex education remains a vital component to reducing unintended teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases among young people as well as providing young people with the information and skills they need to build [healthy relationships](#)," said professor Leslie M. Kantor, chair of the department of urban-global public health at the Rutgers School of Public Health. "Recent attempts by the government to shift funding away from evidence-based pregnancy prevention programs and back to abstinence-only-until-marriage-approaches are out of alignment with what likely voters want."

The study found that Democrats and Republicans express similar support for including the issues of puberty and sexually transmitted diseases in school sex education programs and Republicans were more likely to also want abstinence included as a topic. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to want the topics of healthy relationships, [birth control](#), consent and [sexual orientation](#) included in school sex education programs. However, strong support exists for including all of the topics.

"Planned Parenthood's mission includes providing sex education programs and resources that teach teens to make healthy, informed choices," said Nicole Levitz, Director of Digital Products at Planned Parenthood Federation of America and a co-author of the study. "This study validates that most likely voters want comprehensive sex education

for middle and high school students."

"This study reconfirms broad and deep support among people in the United States for the importance of teaching high quality sex [education](#) that includes information about a myriad of topics, including birth control, healthy relationships, and consent," said Ginny Ehrlich, CEO, Power to Decide. In addition, it finds that a majority of likely voters across party affiliations support continued funding for the evidence-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPP Program) and Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)—consistent with a previous Power to Decide survey of adults in the United States."

As attitudes and perceptions shift on key topics such as sexual orientation, the researchers said additional studies should be done among likely voters as well as other groups to assess current attitudes toward [sex education](#) practice and policy.

More information: Leslie Kantor et al, Support for sex education and teenage pregnancy prevention programmes in the USA: results from a national survey of likely voters, *Sex Education* (2019). [DOI: 10.1080/14681811.2019.1652807](#)

Provided by Rutgers University

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