

Representative Johnson,

I am Peggy Loonan, a mother of two daughters in the Poudre School District. My youngest is in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and my oldest just began her first year at Rocky Mountain High School. Last year she was at Blevins Junior High. I am also founder and executive director of Life and Liberty for Women, a new non-profit organization doing aggressive abortion rights education.

Last year and this past November, I sat in on the Alpha Center's presentation to my oldest daughter's health class. I took extensive notes and wrote down quotes from the presenters. As I sat in this year's class, I was again appalled that the presenter placed her name and the Alpha Center's number on the board but failed to disclose to our students that they are a Christian based organization that would not refer a woman, even if asked to, to a doctor for contraceptives or an abortion or that they would try to convince a woman not to have an abortion if she went to their offices.

Second, I was appalled that the presenter said that, and I quote, "Condoms aren't made to protect you from HIV, just pregnancy." **Representative Johnson, do you believe that is a true and factual statement about condoms?** Condoms of course, do not protect one from all sexually transmitted diseases, and in fact Deb Morris, from the CSU Health Department, the next presenter, told our students that. But condoms have proven to be effective in preventing the transmission of HIV if used consistently and correctly just as they are 98% effective in pregnancy prevention if used consistently and correctly, something Ms. Morris also said to our students and I say to my daughters.

Representative Johnson, we are talking here about a method of disease prevention that will protect our children, who decide to be sexually active – in their teen years or when they are adults and in or outside of marriage – from getting and dying from AIDS. **How can you, as a public servant, deny the truth about condoms to our youth and endorse the Alpha Center's deceptive presentations?**

Third, the Alpha Center presenter said, without offering any proof whatsoever, that persons who engage in pre-marital sex **would** have difficulty bonding in the future and a higher chance of experiencing adultery and divorce. That's simply false. She also said, again without any proof whatsoever, that 50% of the student body at one of our junior highs was having oral sex. That's a serious charge to make with no proof to back it up and I'm sure that most parents in our school district would be as appalled as I am about these untrue and unproven statements. Clearly, Brian Oliver, PSD Science Coordinator is correct when he said in the e-mail to district health teachers that the Alpha Center's abstinence program is inaccurate. It is also fear-based.

You defended the Alpha Center saying they provide "extensive documentation from the Centers for Disease Control." But this presenter didn't present facts from the CDC. Further, I couldn't trust the Alpha Center to accurately quote the CDC since they've shown a propensity to give false and inaccurate information to begin with. In fact, a story in the Colorado Springs Independent Newspaper on August 16, 2001 concerning abstinence-only programs, by Bruce Mirken said, "Sometimes the information is flat wrong...a curriculum called Choosing the Best,

warns kids about syphilis, stating that 'over 100,000 new cases {are} reported each year, according to a CDC report' when in fact according to the Centers of Disease Control's STD Surveillance, only 6,657 cases of primary and secondary syphilis were reported in 1999." April Lemiux, from the Alpha Center who is also a nurse at McKee Medical Center in Loveland, presented last year to the students at Blevins Junior High, information on STD's and did quote the CDC. She said that there are "101,000 cases annually of syphilis." **Representative Johnson, it appears that information allegedly quoted from the CDC last year by an Alpha Center individual is indeed erroneous, your comment?**

The Alpha Center promotes abstinence till marriage and that is controversial. I teach my daughters that they need to be abstinent until they are in an adult committed relationship and that may or may not mean for some, even for them, marriage. I believe that an abstinence till marriage mandate sets up our young people, particularly girls, to choose marriage at too young of an age before they've finished their education and had a chance to be on their own, have a job, and before they or their male partner are ready for the kind of commitment that would require maturity to keep a marriage intact as a couple grows and changes with the years and through the strain raising a family poses for a marriage. Marrying later than earlier in life is most important for girls should, someday, they experience divorce or choose never to marry and need the means by which they can support themselves and their children.

Representative Johnson, as I understand it, the Alpha Center can't be described as being "out or essentially eliminated" from presenting in the district schools. After I brought my concerns to my principal and my school board representative, district officials observed some presentations by the Alpha Center and concluded that there were some problems with accuracy of their information and requested some changes to their presentations, including having a trained person give the presentations not a volunteer, provide an outline to be given to parents of their presentation as well as full disclosure of the kind of organization they are. Further, it is my understanding that they didn't want to give an outline to parents fearing, they said, that many parents may then opt their children out of the presentation. **Isn't that what parental rights are all about?** They also did not want to provide full disclosure about their organization. **WHY?**

Because, sir, the whole point to a so-called crisis pregnancy center (CPC) is to get, "abortion-minded" women in their doors so they can use religion, videos, and inaccurate information to guilt women into not having an abortion. They need "abortion-minded" women, a term coined by a magazine called "At The Center," published quarterly by a Christian-owned communications management company to educate and support so-called crisis pregnancy centers. The magazine said in its winter 2000 edition, "A major challenge to CPC's in the next decade will be finding new methods to attract abortion-minded women. Each year there are a decreasing number of truly abortion-vulnerable women as clients. However, there's been an increase in the number of clients who aren't abortion-vulnerable, but simply want material resources such as maternity clothes and baby accessories. Every woman in need is important and should be helped. However, CPC's were originally organized to reach the abortion-minded woman and save her baby from abortion." That is also why CPC's have started using ultra-sounds.

Representative Johnson, the only way they can get unsuspecting abortion-minded women in their doors is to not be upfront with groups they speak to as evidenced with their presentation

in my daughter's class and their reaction to the districts request that they disclose who they are. **Isn't the use of deception by the Alpha Center troubling to you?** While the Alpha Center is listed in the phone book under abortion alternatives, clearing identifying themselves, Executive Director Sharon Hindman said in a letter to the editor in the Bullhorn Newspaper in July that, "the majority of clients that are served by the Alpha Center came to us by word of mouth from those who have been here." Clearly, they rely on word of mouth and stealth strategies to get unsuspecting "abortion-minded" women in their doors. **Surely you know that and surely that's troubling to you?**

Finally, I was deeply concerned by what you left out when referencing the National Campaign To Prevent Teen Pregnancy report dated May 2001. First, you said that 93% of youth aged 12-17 said that they want a stronger abstinence message from our society but sir, that doesn't translate into an abstinence-only program.

Second, the report said that while teen pregnancy and childbearing remain very serious problems, with the United States having the highest teen pregnancy and birthrates among comparable industrialized nations, the "modest reductions in rates of teen pregnancy and childbearing noted (in the 1997 report)...have continued their significant decline for several years among all racial and ethnic groups and in all parts of the United States." The report said, "programs to prevent teen pregnancy are making a real difference in encouraging teens to remain abstinent or use contraception when they have sex {and} **no single approach to preventing teen pregnancy can provide a 100% solution.**"

That means sir, that alone, abstinence only programs can't solve the problem as your side of the aisle on this issue claims. In fact the report said, "None of the three evaluated abstinence-only programs showed an overall positive effect on sexual behavior." That means that the fear-based aspect of the abstinent only programs like the one the Alpha Center uses, is ineffective. Further, the report said, "research clearly shows that {some} sex/HIV (or abstinent-based comprehensive sex education) programs reduced the frequency and delayed onset of sex or reduced the number of sexual partners."

The report also said that the most successful programs combined abstinence-based comprehensive sex education programs with helping youth stay in school and with job opportunities. As a parent I understand that perfectly. Abstinent-based comprehensive sex education combined with consistent oversight of your child's performance in school and placing your child in an after school activity (s), which helps their self-esteem, allows your child see a future for themselves and lessons the odds they will make a choice to engage in smoking, drinking, drugs, and sexual activity.

**Representative Johnson**, I understand that you are facing a nasty primary in your bid for the open state senate seat, but trying to say to your right-wing anti-abortion extremist base that you're still one of them with this inaccurate, misleading, and misguided defense of the Alpha Center's strategy, tactics, and grossly inaccurate information which presents a clear danger to our youth, is unacceptable. Bill Kaufman had always spoken highly of you but now I have to question your motivation, honesty and integrity. You have stood your ground with the extremists

in your party before because it was the right thing to do and I'm disappointed to see that this time you've chosen to act for the sake of political expediency rather than doing the right thing.

**While I am not a constituent of yours, I am a parent within the Poudre School District and would very much appreciate a response to my comments and concerns.**

Sincerely,  
Peggy Loonan