

March 1, 2024

Members of the Senate Education Policy Committee
Via Electronic Delivery

Re: Letter in Support of Senate File 3746

Chair Cwodinski and Members of the Education Policy Committee:

Kristen Mark, PhD, MPH and Michael Gendernalik, MSW have submitted this letter to express our support for Senate File 3746. Dr. Kristen Mark is a Professor and a sex and relationship researcher, educator, and therapist with over a decade of experience in the field where she has contributed to over 75 peer-reviewed academic publications and given over 125 talks on the topic nationally and internationally. Michael Gendernalik is a social worker and sexual and gender health educator where they have over a decade of experience in the field, dating back to when they were a sexual health peer educator as a teen.

Today, we are writing in support of Senate File 3746, which would designate the commissioner of education to begin the rulemaking process to adopt statewide academic standards in health. The establishment of such standards would take actionable steps toward ensuring that all Minnesotans are equipped with the knowledge and skills to attain their highest level of health. Furthermore, these standards aim to center the wellbeing of young people and provide the necessary tools to make informed decisions and positive impacts on themselves and their peers throughout their lifespan.

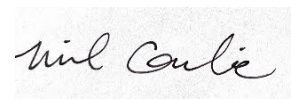
Young people are at risk of continued health hazards such as disease, psychological stressors, substance misuse, violence, and more without these standards. A holistic approach to health education is essential to preventing harm and creating safer and thriving communities across the state of Minnesota. The development of these standards further builds a Minnesota that upholds our reputation for being a national leader in education.

As professionals in the field of sexual and gender health with a focus on harm reduction and health promotion, establishing statewide health standards will empower the youth of Minnesota to live safer and healthier lives and have long-term benefits in communities across the state. Dr. Kristen Mark and Michael Gendernalik respectfully request your support for Senate File 3746.

In Community,



Kristen Mark, PhD, MPH
dr.kristen.mark@gmail.com



Michael Gendernalik, MSW
mkgender@gmail.com