

Preserving Principles of Science Over Ideology in Health Policy

1 Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, is committed both to medical  
2 research and to the separation of church and state. Hadassah therefore, is deeply  
3 concerned about recent health policy decisions that are rooted in religious and political  
4 ideology, rather than in the best scientific and medical evidence.

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6 This trend is particularly apparent in recent federal funding policies for sex education  
7 programs in schools. Despite solid evidence that only complete, accurate sex education  
8 programs – including information on contraceptives – are effective at decreasing the  
9 frequency of sex and increasing contraception use among teens, federal funds have  
10 increasingly flowed to programs that teach abstinence-only. In a similar vein, key health  
11 policy-makers are now disparaging the effectiveness of condoms at reducing the  
12 transmission of AIDS despite incontrovertible evidence to the contrary.

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14 Hadassah calls on government officials to draw from the best scientific and medical  
15 evidence available -- not religious or political ideology -- when shaping the nation's  
16 health policy. Specifically, Hadassah urges the Administration, Congress, state and local  
17 governments to fund and promote balanced, accurate sex education programs that inform  
18 students about contraception and disease prevention as well as about abstinence.

19 Hadassah further calls on federal, state and local governments to recognize the evidence  
20 that condoms prevent transmission of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)  
21 and to promote their use for disease prevention in the U.S. and overseas.