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## **Sexually Transmitted Infections Are Soaring in Charlotte and the Parents Bill of Rights Isn't Helping**

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North Carolina is experiencing a concerning increase in sexually transmitted infections. Last year, the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services sounded the alarm about a significant, statewide rise in syphilis cases among women and babies.

The Mecklenburg County Health Department even held a Syphilis Symposium in 2022 due to a rise in congenital syphilis and stillbirths: each case a preventable tragedy.

Unfortunately, the Parents' Bill of Rights, passed by the N.C. General Assembly in 2023, could make things worse this year. This new law requires parents and caregivers to opt-in for their children to receive sex education in school, preventing all students from equal access to basic sexual health education and empowerment to make informed decisions about their sexual health.