Tee’d Off

February 1, 1999 By Shana Naomi Krochmal

School nixes safe-sex shirt

When Jibri Knight, 17, designed a t-shirt for Tallahassee, Florida’s Lincoln High School seniors featuring a green condom package and “99 percent effective, there’s nothing like a good graduation cap,” school officials balked. “The shirt is sexually suggestive and does not follow our dress code,” said assistant principal Randy Pridgeon. POZ *asked Knight for his version:*

What did the administration do?

I was pulled out of class. I told them, “If I’m promoting sex, at least I’m promoting safe sex.” They didn’t think it made a difference -- I was suspended for two days. The next day, students gathered at Tom Brown Park, formed a line of 30 or 40 cars and drove to campus in a caravan. I had to stop when we reached school property because I wasn’t allowed on. Teachers were grabbing students, and those who didn’t take off their t-shirts were given in-school detentions or sent home for the day. About 70 other students protested near the auditorium, and that night a bunch of students wore the shirts to the football game.

What was behind the tee’s design?

At first we just made the shirts for fun. But there are pregnant girls walking around the halls, and we know people who have STDs. It became important that we were promoting safe sex and taking care of our classmates. They’re not so worried about AIDS, or they figure they’re too good to get an STD. People in town have been more supportive than the school administration. Parents have come up to me to say thanks. They felt it was a good measure. They want their kids to have safer sex.

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