

Transcript of an interview with  
**Elayne Bennett**, president and founder of the Best Friends Foundation  
by **Bill O'Reilly** on *The O'Reilly Factor* television news program  
on November 9th, 2007 at 8:00 p.m.

**O'REILLY:** "Factor" follow up segment tonight, a decision by a Portland, Maine school board to distribute birth control pills to girls as young as 11-years old without parental permission has caused shockwaves all over the country. "The Factor" has been investigating. And we found out that a local chapter of the ACLU is a force behind the decision. What a surprise, right?

Maine executive director Shenna Bellows is publicly advocating the pill deal, but will not share her thoughts with us. However, the opposition will.

Joining us from Charlotte, North Carolina, Elayne Bennett, the founder of the Best Friends Foundation, a mentoring organization for young Americans. And in full disclosure, I give money...

**ELAYNE BENNETT, BEST FRIENDS FOUNDATION:** Yes, you do.

**O'REILLY:** ...to the Best Friends Foundation. So I want everybody to know that. Now...

**BENNETT:** And we appreciate that.

**O'REILLY:** ...the main situation's troubling a lot of Americans. But they say, the ACLU up there and the others behind it, look, we're trying to cut down on pregnancies. 11-year-old girls can get pregnant. And if they get pregnant, then you have the abortions. So Christians and traditional Americans should support the action. What say you?

**BENNETT:** Well, what I want to say, Bill, is that we are delighted at the Best Friends Foundation, that the birth rate in D.C. public schools has been cut in half. That's the recent news. And that was published in "The Washington Post" about a week ago.

But what "The Post" didn't tell you is that teen sexual activity has also dropped dramatically from 71 percent in 1996 to 48 percent in 2005. So now more than half of the D.C. public school teenagers are not having sex.

**O'REILLY:** All right. Now you're based in D.C., even though you're coming to us tonight from Charlotte.

**BENNETT:** Right, right.

**O'REILLY:** Your organization is based in Washington.

**BENNETT:** Based there.

**O'REILLY:** And you attribute the drop in the sexual activity to what?

**BENNETT:** To programs, abstinence programs like Best Friends and Best Men. Youth development abstinence programs, where children are being given the right message, where they're engaged in conversation, where they're talked to about what their lives can be, about making good choices, and about achievement rather than contraception.

**O'REILLY:** OK, now wait, wait, wait...

**BENNETT:** And the interesting thing is they're listening.

**O'REILLY:** ...let me play devil's advocate here. Let me play devil's advocate.

**BENNETT:** OK.

**O'REILLY:** So your organization mentors mostly poor children. They provide adult supervision. The kid has a problem, goes in. You have a mentor for the child. And they talk about all of this, but...

**BENNETT:** Right.

**O'REILLY:** ...your organization does promote abstinence behavior, which is controversial. Now why can't...

**BENNETT:** And Bill, our children aren't poor.

**O'REILLY:** Why couldn't you...

**BENNETT:** All of our children...

**O'REILLY:** Why couldn't you do all of it? Why couldn't you offer the pill to 11 to 14-year-old girls, promote abstinence and mentoring as well? Wouldn't that be the best solution?

**BENNETT:** Because 11 to 14-year-old girls really don't want to have sex. We've actually - we actually used a poll from the D.C. campaign to prevent teen pregnancy which shows that 91 percent of high school teens say that they really think that schools should give the message of abstinence, to tell kids not to have sex. They really are not - that's not what they're about. They've got a lot of other things to do with their lives right now. And we also know the incredible epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases. 12 to 14-year-old girls are not physically, let alone emotionally and cognitively ready to have sex.

**O'REILLY:** All right, now...

**BENNETT:** And if an 11-year old.

**O'REILLY:** ...what is wrong with what Maine is doing, in your opinion? So they're -- and so if everybody hasn't followed this story, the Maine school board there voted 7 to 2 to allow their clinic in the King Middle School, you're looking at it now...

**BENNETT:** Yes.

**O'REILLY:** ...to disburse birth control pills to girls 11 to 14 without parental consent. In your opinion, Ms. Bennett, what is wrong with that?

**BENNETT:** Well, first of all, without parental consent, I'm not even sure that's legal.

**O'REILLY:** They're getting sued - they're going to get sued over that.

**BENNETT:** Parents need to know. That -- well, and I think they should be. Secondly, what are these -- 11-year-old girls, Bill, for the most part are not having sex with 11-year-old boys. I think they need to find out who the partners are here. I would guess...

**O'REILLY:** Well, the authorities are, you know, we forced the authorities to go in.

**BENNETT:** I would guess these are - well, good. Good for you.

**O'REILLY:** But on a philosophical educational basis, what are you objecting to there? I mean, if you were to talk to these Maine school board people, try to convince them of the error of their ways, you would say what?

**BENNETT:** I would say do you have a youth development abstinence program in place? Are you talking to middle schoolers about what are the right choices in life? And right now, if you're 10, 11, 12, 13, sexual activity is not for you. It's not appropriate.

**O'REILLY:** But they would say that, you know, the secular progressives, ACLU, would say that would be intruding on the child and that's a religious based philosophy that you have, Ms. Bennett.

**BENNETT:** It's not a religious based philosophy. At the Best Friends Foundation, we're in the schools during the school day. We do not violate the separation of church and state. This is a practical based philosophy. This is a healthy philosophy.

**O'REILLY:** All right.

**BENNETT:** This is a -- let children have their childhood is what we're about.

**O'REILLY:** I'm with you. That's why I give you the loot. I mean, I think that you're doing the right thing.

**BENNETT:** I know.

**O'REILLY:** And it works. You know, mentoring works.

**BENNETT:** And we need more. Thank you so much.

**O'REILLY:** Mentoring - well, you know, people can get in touch with you at the [bestfriendsfoundation.com](http://bestfriendsfoundation.com), right?

**BENNETT:** And we appreciate that.

**O'REILLY:** That's all right. That's all right.

**BENNETT:** And...

**O'REILLY:** But I think we're fighting the culture war. I think the adults involved here...

**BENNETT:** It's a major...

**O'REILLY:** It's a major cultural war. And these SP ACLU people, they want kids to have the freedom to do whatever they want as young as 11. Ms. Bennett, thanks very much.

**END OF INTERVIEW**