



THE  
NATIONAL  
CAMPAIGN TO  
PREVENT TEEN PREGNANCY

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF PROGRESS  
IN IMPROVING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN,  
YOUTH AND FAMILIES

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## **Declining Teen Birth Rates Contribute to Improvements in Child Well-Being in the District of Columbia**

*First-Ever State Specific Analysis Released*

(Washington, DC) — Declining teen birth rates have significantly improved overall child well-being in all states, and the District of Columbia, according to a new state-by-state analysis released by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Specifically, declines in the teen birth rate have played a major role in improving child poverty in the District of Columbia. That is, child poverty would have been worse in 2002 if the teen birth rate in The District of Columbia had not declined between 1991 and 2002.

Between 1991 and 2002, the national teen birth rate declined 30%. The teen birth rate in The District of Columbia declined 37% during the same time period (2002 is the most recent year for which state data are available). This new research asks the question: “What if teen birth rates in each state had *not* declined between 1991 and 2002?” In The District of Columbia, if the teen birth rate had not declined:

- Nearly 4,600 additional children under age 18 would have been born to teen mothers between 1991 and 2002.
- Nearly 2,700 (or 21%) more children under age 6 would have been living in poverty in 2002.
- Nearly 2,900 (or 21%) more children under age 6 would have been living in single mother households in 2002.

The analysis also estimates that the decline in the teen birth rate in The District of Columbia between 1991 and 2002 resulted in:

- A 10% improvement in the poverty rate for children under age six in D.C. in 2002, and
- A 10% improvement in the proportion of children under age six living in a single-mother household in 2002.

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“National and state investments in teen pregnancy prevention pay huge dividends,” said Sarah Brown, Director of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. “As this analysis clearly shows, preventing teen pregnancy is one of the most direct and effective ways states can reduce poverty and improve overall child well-being.”

Despite the impressive strides all states made in reducing the teen birth rate between 1991 and 2002, and the important contribution this progress has made to improving the number of children living in poverty and in single parent families, there is still much work to be done. The U.S. still has the highest rate of teen pregnancy among comparable countries and one in three girls in this country become pregnant by age 20. “If all states can continue to bring down teen pregnancy and birth rates, the prospects of this generation of children and the next will greatly improve,” said Brown.

The National Campaign’s new state analysis uses methods developed by the U.S. Congress’ Joint Economic Committee in a report released by the Ways & Means Committee in April 2004. It was made possible by a generous grant from the United Health Foundation.

**For more information**, including detailed fact sheets for each state, charts showing state rankings and racial and ethnic breakdowns, and the methodology used in this analysis, visit [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org)

**About the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.** The National Campaign is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization supported primarily by private donations. Our mission is to improve the well-being of children, youth, and families by reducing teen pregnancy.

**About the United Health Foundation.** United Health Foundation was established in 1999 by UnitedHealth Group as a nonprofit, private foundation. Its support of this new research is evidence of United Health Foundation’s commitment to providing information to support the health and medical decisions made by physicians, health professionals, community leaders, and individuals that lead to better health outcomes and healthier communities. Visit [www.unitedhealthfoundation.org](http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org) for more information.

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