

March 20, 2002

Dear Governor:

As you may know, I have made reducing teen pregnancy and birth rates one of my highest state priorities over the past few years. In addressing this issue, I have had the good fortune to enjoy the support and active participation of many individuals, agencies, and organizations. ***I am writing today to alert you to an exciting new national event that is being spearheaded by one of those organizations, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, and to urge you to promote this event to your colleagues and constituents.***

The first annual *National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy* will be held on May 8, 2002. The goal for the National Day is for thousands of teens to participate in an online activity through an interactive quiz that makes them stop, think about the consequences of sex, and make a personal connection to the risk and reality of teen pregnancy. Teens so often say, "It won't happen to me," and this National Day is an effort to begin breaking through that wall of denial. The plan is for teens not only to take the quiz themselves but also to pass it on to their friends by e-mail so that the whole activity spreads nationwide. The National Day will only be successful if we reach teens and engage them in this activity. To that end, we, who are in leadership positions in states, have a critical role to play.

By way of background, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is a private, nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the well being of children, youth, and families by reducing teen pregnancy. The organization's goal is to reduce the rate of teen pregnancy by one-third between 1996 and 2005. As you know, high rates of teen pregnancy burden not only teenagers but also their children, families, and communities, while imposing large costs on taxpayers as well. To reduce teenage pregnancy, the Campaign provides a national presence and leadership to raise awareness of the issue and to attract new voices and resources to the cause, such as business leaders, policy makers, faith communities, and the entertainment media. It also provides concrete assistance to those already working in the field. The Campaign is organizing the National Day in a manner that is non-controversial, nonpartisan, and deeply respectful of the many sensitivities that the teen pregnancy issue engenders. The message of the National Day is straightforward: teens need to think about the importance of postponing pregnancy and parenthood until they are adults, and they should make a personal commitment to do so.

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To date, the Campaign has lined up an impressive list of more than 65 partners, including founding partners, *Teen People* magazine and *Teen People* Online, and national organizations such as the National Conference of State Legislatures, the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Council of La Raza, the WB Network, Big Brothers, Big Sisters of America, the March of Dimes, Goodwill Industries, the National 4-H, the National School Boards Association, the National Education Association, and the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families (a complete list is enclosed).

I believe the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy provides a wonderful platform for Governors to remind our colleagues and constituents about the importance of continuing our efforts to reduce teen pregnancy and birth rates. Indeed, we cannot afford to become complacent when four in ten teen girls still become pregnant at least once before turning 20! I urge you to promote the National Day in your state by taking action in one or more of the following ways:

- Designate May 8, 2002 as National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Day in your state with a proclamation or resolution.
- Send letters to your colleagues in the state legislature urging them to mention the National Day on the House or Senate Floor.
- Post information on your web page about the National Day, including links to the on-line quiz.
- Contact your local media and offer to submit an op-ed or be interviewed regarding the National Day and teen pregnancy prevention issues.
- Contact your colleagues in the state health agency, department of education or other offices that serve teens and urge them to plan activities for the National Day.

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy has myriad fliers, generic op-eds and press releases, and other materials available to National Day participants. For more information and to obtain those materials, please contact Ellen Fern, Director of National and Corporate Partnerships, at (202) 478-8519 or visit the Campaign website at [www.teenpregnancy.org](http://www.teenpregnancy.org). The National Campaign will also be publicizing state and local activities in its materials, on its website and to the media, so please share your plans with Ellen as well.

This letter comes with best regards and my thanks in advance for your participation in this important event.

Sincerely,

John Engler  
Governor

Enclosures