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REID AND CLINTON: NEW TEEN PREGNANCY STATS SHOW NEED TO PUT PREVENTION FIRST

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Today is National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Washington, DC — Marking the fifth annual National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton today noted that new statistics from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy show we still have work to do to prevent teen pregnancy and encourage teens to delay sexual activity. Senators Reid and Clinton are cosponsors of legislation, the Prevention First Act, which has as a top goal reducing teen pregnancies.

“All Americans agree we should reduce the number of unintended pregnancies, and these new numbers show how much work remains to be done,” said Senator Reid. “We must find common ground if ever America is to solve this difficult and persistent problem, and I am proud to be working with Senator Clinton on our common goal of educating teens, lowering teen pregnancy rates, and reducing the number of abortions.”

“I was proud to help create the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy as First Lady and continue to work in the Senate to advance this critical goal. In part as a result of the National Campaign, the teen birth rate has fallen by nearly a third since the early 1990s, but today’s statistics show that we still have work to do. We need to implement policies that educate and support young women so these pregnancies don’t happen in the first place. Our Prevention First bill would help reduce the rates of unintended pregnancy, decrease abortions and improve access to women’s health care,” said Senator Clinton.

The National Campaign today released a new analysis of teen pregnancy data that shows the number of sexually experienced teens—those who have had sexual intercourse at least once—remains alarmingly high. Almost one-third of all sexually experienced teen girls aged 15-19 have been pregnant and more than one in eight sexually experienced teen boys have caused a pregnancy.

The National Campaign launched with a national goal of reducing unwanted pregnancies by one-third over the decade. Thanks in part to the work of campaign, the teen birth rate fell 32.5 percent between 1991 and 2003 to a record low. However, the United States still has the highest rate of teen pregnancy and births in the Western industrialized world, underscoring the need for continued vigilance.

Senators Reid and Clinton introduced the Prevention First Act, which is a comprehensive bill aimed at reducing unintended pregnancies, preventing abortions and improving women's health. The bill would increase Title X, the nation's only program devoted solely to making family planning services available to all women; reduce teen pregnancy; provide equitable insurance coverage for contraception; and increase awareness about Emergency Contraception. The Prevention First Act would also save scarce public health dollars by: reducing the number of unintended pregnancies, reducing the rate of sexually transmitted disease, reducing the costs to the Medicaid program, and providing for the early detection of HIV, breast cancer and cervical cancer.

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Additional information on the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, the new teen pregnancy statistics released today and the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy are available at www.teenpregnancy.org.

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