



April 25, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman, Senate Appropriations
Committee
U.S. Capitol Building, S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member, Senate
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Capitol Building, S-146A
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, Health and Human Services, and
Education
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member, Senate
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
and Education
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Inouye and Harkin and Ranking Members Cochran and Shelby:

On behalf of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, I would like to express deep appreciation for the inclusion of continued funding for evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs through the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) in the Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution, H.R. 1473. I would also like to express our strong support for funding this program at \$118.5 million in FY 2012. This funding level is consistent with the amount in the President's FY 2012 budget request. It represents an increase of \$4 million over the FY 2010 funding level, and \$9 million above the FY 2011 level, as H.R. 1473 cut \$5 million from the program. This funding level will allow more than 100 organizations across the country to continue providing evidence-based programs to 200,000 youth per year, while providing adequate program support, technical assistance, and evaluation to ensure the success of this important effort. This investment also makes good economic sense given the high burden taxpayers shoulder for the costs of teen childbearing.

The OAH Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Initiative emphasizes evidence and evaluation, and funds programs that work at a time when progress on the challenge of reducing teen pregnancy is especially critical. Though teen pregnancy rates have declined by about a third since the early 1990s, it is still the case that three in ten girls in this country will become pregnant before the age of 20. The United States has the highest rate of teen pregnancies in the developed world—more than 700,000 pregnancies to teens each year. At a time when the United States needs to become more competitive in the global economy, our teen pregnancy rates are still much higher than our trading partners and competitors, which means our young people have less opportunity to get the

education and skills they need to compete. Less than half of teen parents (40%) go on to finish high school, and less than two percent will complete college by the time they turn 30.

Americans overwhelmingly support programs like the OAH Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Initiative. Nearly nine in ten adults (89%) say that there should be direct efforts in their communities to prevent teen pregnancy. Communities all over the country are clamoring for federal funding for these programs—demand far outweighs supply. In 2010, more than 1,000 organizations applied for grant funding from OAH. Funding was available for only 10 percent of them.

Moreover, funding effective programs to prevent teen pregnancy is fiscally responsible. Research shows that in 2004 alone, teen childbearing cost U.S. taxpayers at least \$9.1 billion. The same study estimated that the U.S. realized \$6.7 billion in savings because of the declines in the teen birth rate between 1991 and 2004. A recent analysis by the Brookings Institution determined that replicating effective teen pregnancy prevention programs such as those supported by the OAH grants is cost beneficial—in other words, these federal outlays save more public funding than they cost.

In addition to funding for evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs through OAH, we urge you to provide adequate funding levels for other important programs that help to reduce teen and unplanned pregnancy more generally. These programs include the Title X Family Planning Program, the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Community Health Centers.

We appreciate the fiscal constraints facing the Committee and respectfully urge you to support this request. Doing so is a cost-effective way to improve our nation's health, strengthen education and workforce competitiveness, reduce taxpayer costs, and reduce abortion as well. We look forward to working with your office. Please contact Rachel Fey at (202) 478-8529 or rfey@thenc.org, for any further information regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Sarah S. Brown
CEO