

November 17, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Office of the Speaker of the House
of Representatives
United States Capitol, H-232
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Democratic Leader of the
House of Representatives
United States Capitol, H-204
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Office of the Democratic Leader of the
Senate
United States Capitol, S-221
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Office of the Republican Leader of the
Senate
United States Capitol, S-230
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representatives Boehner and Pelosi, and Senators Reid and McConnell:

As local, state, and national organizations dedicated to the health and success of youth in this country, we urge Congress to continue funding for the Office of Adolescent Health's (OAH) Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program and the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP). Since the programs were first funded in Fiscal Year 2010, more than 115 organizations across the country have received competitive grants and 45 states as well as D.C., Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia have received formula grants for programs that help reduce teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), as well as equip youth with the skills to lead productive lives. These grantees are well on the way to serve approximately 1.3 million youth over the next four years. Unfortunately, the FY 12 draft bill released by the Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education on September 29th proposed cutting the OAH Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program by \$65 million (from \$105 million to \$40 million), and redirecting \$20 million of the remaining funds for abstinence-only education. Unfortunately, the draft bill eliminates existing language directing most of the current funding to effective programs. Additionally, the House bill would block implementation of the Affordable Care Act, which would mean ending mandatory funding for PREP (\$75 million/year), Pregnancy Assistance Fund (\$25 million/year), and Home Visiting programs (\$350 million/year). In contrast, the FY 12 bill that passed the Senate Appropriations Committee on September 21st would continue funding for evidence-based Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program grants and leaves the mandatory funding streams intact.

The OAH Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program and PREP emphasize evidence and evaluation, supporting 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 39%

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 U.S. needs to become more competitive in the global economy, our teen pregnancy rates are still much higher than our trading partners and competitors.

Moreover, eliminating programs that address teen pregnancy in the name of fiscal responsibility is penny-wise and pound foolish. A recent study by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy found that in 2008 alone, teen childbearing cost U.S. taxpayers at least \$10.9 billion. The same study estimated that the U.S. realized \$8.4 billion in savings because of the declines in the teen birth rate between 1991 and 2008. A recent analysis by the Brookings Institution determined that replicating effective teen pregnancy prevention programs such as those supported by the OAH grants and PREP are cost-beneficial—in other words, these federal outlays save more public funding than they cost.

Nearly nine in ten adults (89%) say that there should be direct efforts in their communities to prevent teen pregnancy and demand for evidence-based programs far outweighs supply. For example, 1,100 organizations submitted applications for the OAH funding in FY 10 and OAH only had sufficient funding to make 100 grants.

Initiatives to reduce teen pregnancy contribute to progress on a host of other critical issues that are important to Americans, such as ensuring that each young person in this country can complete his or her education. 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. Nine in ten adults (90%) and teens themselves say that reducing teen pregnancy is a very effective way to reduce the high school dropout rate and improve academic achievement.

Evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs represent important efforts by the federal government to address the nation's high rates of teen pregnancy, and we hope that you will stand with the many groups below to protect this funding that will improve the lives of youth and future generations, while reducing public sector costs.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Advocates for Youth
The AIDS Institute
America's Promise Alliance
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Humane Association
American Social Health Association
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Children's Aid Society Carrera Program
The Dibble Institute
The Emily Program
Feminist Majority
Girls Inc.
Healthy Teen Network
March of Dimes
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association of County Human Services Administrators
The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
National Center for Lesbian Rights

State and Local Organizations

411 Teen Health (Decatur, IL)
A Positive Approach to Teen Health (PATH, Inc.) (Valparaiso, IN)
Adolescent Medicine, Pediatrics, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California (Los Angeles, CA)
Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Campaign of North Carolina (APPCNC)
Allen Women's Health (Waterloo, IA)
Cabarrus Partnership for Children (Concord, NC)

National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.
National Coalition of Pastors' Spouses
National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
The National Crittenton Foundation
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Network for Youth
National Organization for Women
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference
National Women's Law Center
The New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good
Partnership for Prevention
People For the American Way
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Connection
Progressive Policy Institute
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Religious Institute
The Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States
Third Way
Wyman Center

California Association of School Health Educators
California Family Health Council
Central Montana Family Planning (Lewistown, MT)
Child Abuse Prevention Association/CAPA (Beaufort, SC)
Community Connections Resource Center (Louisville, KY)

Concilio Latino de Salud, Inc.(Phoenix, AZ)

Coronado High School Cal-SAFE Program
(West Covina, CA)

Dedicated Individually to Valiantly Assist
(D.I.V.A.), Incorporated (Columbia, SC)
Department of Global and Community
Health, George Mason University
(Fairfax,VA)

East Valley Community Health Center
(Pomona and West Covina, CA)

Family Planning Association of Northeast
Ohio, Inc. (Painesville, OH)

Family Planning Plus of SUN & MJ
Counties (Lewisburg, PA)

Family Service Agency of San Francisco
Family Support Hawaii (Kailua-Kona, HI)
Hale `Opio Kaua'i, Inc. (Lihu'e, HI)

Hartford Action Plan on Infant Health, Inc
(Hartford, CT)

Healthy Family Initiatives (Houston, TX)

Healthy Teens Coalition of Manatee
County, FL

Hispanas Organized for Political Equality
(CA)

Image Means Everything (Houston, TX)

Investing In Our Youth, Inc. (Quincy, FL)

Joshua Blessings Pregnant, Parenting,
Homeless (PPH) Youth Programs
(Dallas, TX)

Kaizen Corporation for Children &
Families: Princesses within Motherhood
(Pontiac, MI)

Legacy 4 Kids LLC (Napa, CA)

LifeWorks (Austin, TX)

New Haven Public Schools
(New Haven, CT)

New Mexico Forum for Youth in
Community

NIA Management (Elkhart, IN)

NorthCare Promise Place Program
(Oklahoma City, OK)

Okanogan Family Planning (Omak, WA)

Ottawa Youth Sexual Coalition
(Holland, MI)

Parents Anonymous of Tyler Inc.

(Tyler, TX)

Partners for Successful Youth – Lucas
County, Ohio Teen Pregnancy Prevention
Coalition

Petaluma Health Center (Petaluma, CA)

Philemon Ministries (Apopka, FL)

Planned Parenthood of South Florida and the
Treasure Coast, Inc. (West Palm
Beach, FL)

Project Single Moms Worldwide Inc.
(Newport News, VA)

Project-U-Turn Inc. (Detroit, MI)

Rockford MELD (Rockford, IL)

Rum River Health Services, Inc
(Princeton, MN)

South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen
Pregnancy

STEPP Program (Truckee, CA)

Stockton Unified Early Childhood
Education Cal-SAFE (Stockton, CA)

Teen Futures (Pasadena, CA)

Mount Toro High School Salinas Union
High School District Teen Parent
Program Cal-SAFE (Salinas, CA)

The Rhode Island Alliance

Together For Youth (Waterloo, IA)

Valley Community Clinic
(North Hollywood, CA)

Washington County Teen Pregnancy
Prevention Coalition (Hagerstown, MD)

West Central District Health

Department (North Platte, NE)

Youth Opportunities Unlimited (Marks, MS)