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For Immediate Release

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**Introduction of the Communities of Color Teen Pregnancy Prevention Act of 2011**  
*Statement from The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy*

Today, the Communities of Color Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Act of 2011 was introduced in the House by Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and in the Senate by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA). The bills offer a research-driven, innovative approach to addressing serious racial and ethnic disparities in the rates of teen pregnancy. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy applauds Rep. Roybal-Allard and Senator Boxer for their ongoing commitment to helping young people avoid early pregnancy and encourage Congress to support responsible efforts to address this critical social issue.

Despite significant progress, it is still the case that 52 percent of Latina teens and 50 percent of African American teen girls will become pregnant at least once before age 20—far higher than among non-Hispanic whites. In 2009, the teen birth rates for Latinas, African Americans, and American Indians/Alaska Natives were more than double the teen birth rate of non-Hispanic whites.

The Communities of Color Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Act of 2011 is a valuable complement to existing investments in evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs. Specifically the bills would support research and demonstration projects for racial and ethnic communities with disproportionately high rates of teen pregnancy. The bills also integrate efforts to prevent teen pregnancy with strategies to address dating violence and build healthy relationships.

“These bills provide an important focus on developing and testing programs to help communities with high rates of teen pregnancy, while increasing research about the factors behind these high rates and how to address them,” said Sarah Brown, CEO of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. “While there is a growing list of programs that have been shown to reduce risky sexual behavior among teens, this bill would contribute to expanding the approaches available to communities across America, particularly those with some of the greatest needs. Reducing teen pregnancy will help young people complete their education and strengthen our economy.”

Teen pregnancy costs the nation at least \$10.9 billion annually, and contributes to a cycle of poor education and other outcomes that affect the long-term strength of our workforce. As the nation strives to improve high school and college completion, it is worth noting that parenthood is a leading cause of school drop out among teen girls—fully 30 percent of teen girls cited pregnancy or parenthood as a reason for dropping out of high school. The rate is even higher for communities of color. For example, 36 percent of Hispanic girls and 38 percent of African American girls cite pregnancy or parenthood as a reason they dropped out.

**About The National Campaign:** The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy seeks to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families. Our specific strategy is to prevent teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy among single, young adults. We support a combination of responsible values and behavior by both men and women and responsible policies in both the public and private sectors. If we are successful, child and family well-being will improve.