

Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act: A Summary

Representatives Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), with the backing of both pro-life and pro-choice members, just introduced a new bill, The “Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act.” The legislation is an initiative that will work to reduce the number of abortions in America by both preventing unintended pregnancies and supporting pregnant women and new parents. This bill enables pro-life and pro-choice advocates to find common ground to reduce the number of abortions in America while protecting personal liberties. To measure its success, the legislation both provides grants to states to encourage effective collection and reporting of abortion surveillance data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with an explicit preclusion from reporting any individually identifiable information, and calls for the Institute of Medicine to study why women choose to have an abortion.

Prevention

The bill first aims to prevent unintended pregnancies through:

- **Sex Education (Title I):** Grants for pregnancy prevention education will give preference to various programs, including those that encourage teens to delay sexual activity and provide information about contraception, but will be available only to applicants who agree to provide age-appropriate, factually and medically accurate and complete, and scientifically-based information. Grant recipients must be able to match 25% of the federal funds. This section is largely drawn from S. 2508, Senator Menendez’s “Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Responsibility and Opportunity Act.”
- **After-School Programs (Title II):** This section would reauthorize appropriations to various after-school programs, including the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the Carol M. White Physical Education Programs, and Federal TRIO programs, and GEARUP. This section is drawn from the Menendez bill, S. 2508.
- **Teen Pregnancy Prevention Incentive Grants (Title III):** For fiscal year 2007, any state which submits a plan to decrease teen pregnancy and teen births that includes both young men and young women, involves parents or other caretakers, and makes a particular effort to reach communities or populations experiencing above-average teen pregnancy rates may receive a grant. For each of the fiscal years 2008-2011, the grants will be available only to “high-achieving states,” who achieve above average progress in reducing teen pregnancy rates and also submit a plan to decrease teen pregnancy, involve parents or other caretakers, focus on young men as well as young women, and pay special attention to communities or populations experiencing higher teen pregnancy rates. No matching funds are required to receive these grants. The Secretary of HHS will also establish a new national goal for teen pregnancy prevention and periodically update Congress on the related progress. This section was inspired by S. 657 of the 108th Congress, Senator Bayh and Lieberman’s “Strengthening Families Act of 2003,” and H.R. 3555, Representative Harman and Shays’ “Responsible Funding to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Act.”
- **Demonstration Grants to Encourage Creative Approaches to Teen Pregnancy Prevention (Title IV):** This grant program is designed to support creative approaches to reducing teen pregnancy. Grant recipients must provide a 25% match to the federal funds. They are also required to submit to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reports of their success, and the Secretary of HHS, in turn, must submit a report on the success of the grant programs to Congress. This section is also drawn from the Menendez bill, S. 2508.
- **National Campaign to Enlist Parents in Preventing Teen Pregnancy (Title V):** A significant grant will be available to establish a national center for the parents of teens. The center will work to support parents by equipping them with information and resources to promote and strengthen communication with their children about sex,

values, and healthy relationships; to develop and implement print, broadcast, internet and other new media campaigns to promote positive information and messages for parents about how they can help address teen pregnancy; and to provide challenge grants to states to promote parent education and involvement. This section is similar to language establishing a National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Resource Center that Senator Lincoln had included as an amendment in the Senate Finance Committee's welfare reform legislation in March 2005.

- **Restoration of Medicaid Entitlement to Coverage of Family Planning Services (Title VI):** The Deficit Reduction Act, now passed into law, puts countless low-income women's access to family planning at risk through the creation of "benchmark" plans. Benchmark plans allow states to avoid federal requirements for required services in the Medicaid program, one of which is family planning. This provision would ensure that low-income women on Medicaid will continue to have access to contraception by restoring family planning to the status of mandatory for benchmark plans under the Medicaid program. This section can also be found in the "Unintended Pregnancy Reduction Act of 2006," introduced as S. 2916 by Senator Clinton and H.R. 5795 by Representatives Lowey and DeLauro.
- **Expanded Coverage of Family Planning for Low-Income Women (Title VII):** Federal law requires state Medicaid programs to cover pregnancy-related care for women with an income up to 133% of the federal poverty line, and gives states the flexibility to set the income ceiling even higher. Over 40 states currently cover pregnancy-related services for women with income above the required level. This provision would amend the Medicaid statute to ensure that states extend coverage for family planning services and supplies to women who would be entitled to Medicaid funded prenatal, labor, delivery and postpartum care. This section can also be found in Clinton and Lowey/DeLauro's S. 2916/H.R. 5795.
- **Increasing Support for the Nation's Title X Family Planning Program (Title X):** This section would authorize increased funding for Title X of the Public Health Service Act, the only federal program dedicated solely to providing contraceptive and related reproductive health care services to low-income women. This section is drawn from the "Prevention First Act," introduced as S. 20 by Senators Clinton and Reid and H.R. 1709 by Representatives Slaughter, DeGette, Johnson, and Greenwood.
- **Contraception Information for New Moms (Title XVII):** The bill authorizes new grants which would require providing accurate and complete information about contraception at nurse home visits to teenage and first-time mothers.

Support

The second half of the bill is designed to provide support to women preparing for childbirth and new parents through:

- **Disclosure of Information for Abortion Services (Title VIII):** This section ensures that primary care clinics that receive federal financial assistance and provide abortion services obtain informed consent from a woman seeking an abortion. At the woman's request, information regarding alternatives to abortion, including adoption and information about support for carrying her pregnancy to term, must also be provided. Information about family planning must also be offered. Clinics must ensure that their services are nonjudgmental and that all information provided is "medically and factually accurate," defined as consistent with leading professional organizations such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, published in peer-reviewed journals, or verified by the weight of research conducted in compliance with accepted scientific methods.
- **Expanding Medicaid and S-CHIP Coverage (Title IX):** This section provides states the option to expand or add coverage of pregnant women under Medicaid and S-CHIP, increases the S-CHIP definition of a low-income child from 200% to 250% of federal poverty

guidelines, and provides an outreach program to encourage those eligible for services to enroll. Components of this section are drawn from S.740, Senator Bingaman's "Start Healthy, Stay Healthy Act of 2005."

- **Pregnancy as a Pre-Existing Condition (Title XI):** This section would close the gap in coverage of pregnant women who have individual coverage with private insurers. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, which provides that pregnancy cannot be considered a pre-existing condition, applies only to group health plans – not to individual coverage.
- **Increasing Women's Information About Their Pregnancies (Title XII):** This section makes grants for the purchase of ultrasound equipment available to community health centers, for the purpose of offering pregnant women an ultrasound – not requiring it. Consistent with S. 609, the "Prenatally Diagnosed Condition Awareness Act," co-sponsored by Senator Kennedy, this section also requires that women who have received a positive diagnosis for a prenatally-diagnosed condition, such as Down Syndrome, be provided with medically accurate and up-to-date information regarding the reliability of the test and about the condition itself.
- **Preventing Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Title XIII):** This section creates a new violence screening and treatment program for pregnant women and new mothers, which is drawn largely from H.R. 4367, Representative Capps' "Domestic Violence Screening, Treatment, and Prevention Act." This section also supports grants to states to carry out a public awareness campaign regarding domestic violence against pregnant women.
- **Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Students (Title XIV):** This section provides grants to institutions of higher education to provide support services to assist both pregnant students who have decided to carry their pregnancies to term and parenting students in continuing their studies and graduating. It also increases support for the Child Care Access Means Parents In School (CAMPIS) program.
- **Group Homes for Pregnant and Parenting Women (Title XV):** This section requires that federally-funded group homes for pregnant and parenting women provide (upon request) adoption and parenting skills counseling.
- **Expanding Adoption Assistance (Title XVI):** This section increases the adoption tax credit from \$10,000 to \$15,000 for all children and makes the credit refundable.
- **Supporting New Parents (Title XVII):** This section increases support for the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC), makes it easier for new parents to receive nutritional support through food stamps, increases funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program, and provides free home visits by registered nurses to teenage or first-time mothers (to include contraceptive counseling). It also provides for a public awareness campaign regarding resources available to support both women preparing for childbirth and new parents.

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For more detailed information on the legislation or Third Way's messaging advice on abortion, please visit www.third-way.com or contact Rachel Laser, Director of the Culture Project at Third Way, at 202-775-3768 x202 or rlaser@third-way.com.