

March 31, 2011

Chairman Fred Upton
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Henry Waxman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Joe Pitts
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on
Health
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on
Health
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Upton and Pitts and Ranking Members Waxman and Pallone:

On behalf of local, state and national organizations that care about the sexual health of young people across the United States, we submit this letter in support of the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) and would like to express serious concern over proposals to eliminate or reclassify the program.

PREP is the only state-grant program that funds initiatives to reduce the rates of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, among young people. Funding for PREP totals \$75 million per year for a period of five years, 2010–2014. Just over \$55 million of PREP dollars is dedicated to voluntary state grants which are required to provide evidence-based information on both abstinence and contraception, with a substantial emphasis on both. In addition, PREP programs must also address adulthood preparation subjects that assist young people in making informed and responsible decisions about their daily lives including: healthy relationships, adolescent development, financial literacy, educational and career success, and healthy life skills.

Recognizing the need for such education for their young people, a total of 43 states, the District of Columbia, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Puerto Rico applied for funding, showing their own support for this important program in PREP's first year. (By comparison, only 30 states and Puerto Rico applied for funding from the Title V abstinence-only program.) Two additional states plan to apply for PREP for Fiscal Year 2011 funds. States across the country are facing severe fiscal crises at the same time they are recognizing that they have to be doing better for their young people in helping them protect themselves from unintended pregnancy, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections.

PREP also provides \$10 million for grants to implement innovative youth pregnancy prevention strategies and target services to high-risk, vulnerable, and culturally under-represented youth populations, including youth in foster care, homeless youth, youth with HIV/AIDS, and pregnant women and mothers who are under 21 years of age and their partners. A total of 13 grantees have already received funding to provide programming in 17 states— including for Members of the Subcommittee, the states of California, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

Statistics show that the need for this program is immense:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Youth Risk Behavior Survey, in 2009, 46 percent of high school students have ever had sexual intercourse, while almost 40 percent of those students did not use a condom during last sexual intercourse.
- The United States has one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy rates in the developed world as each year more than 750,000 young women aged 15-19 become pregnant with more than 80 percent of those pregnancies unintended.
- While young people in the U.S., aged 15–25, make up only one-quarter of the sexually active population, they contract about half of the 19 million STDs annually. The CDC estimates that one in four young women ages 15-19 has an STD.
- Young people aged 13–29 account for over one-third of the estimated 56,300 new HIV infections each year, the largest share of any age group. Two young people every hour are infected with HIV.

We need to redouble our efforts on preventing unintended pregnancy, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections for our nation's adolescents—not cut off funding.

Leading public health and medical organizations, including the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Public Health Association, the Institute of Medicine, and the Society of Adolescent Medicine, all support a comprehensive approach to educating young people about sex. As the American Medical Association noted, “federal funding of comprehensive sex education programs that stress the importance of abstinence in preventing unwanted teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, and also teach about contraceptive choices and safer sex [is imperative].”

These mandatory dollars provide a clearly needed funding stream that will contribute to the stability and infrastructure of prevention programs for states at a time when fiscal uncertainty abounds. All teens need accurate, complete information to help them both postpone sexual activity and protect themselves if they become sexually active. They also need the life skills necessary to make informed and healthy decisions. **We ask you to work to preserve mandatory funding for the Personal Responsibility Education Program and continue giving young people the tools to make responsible decisions about their sexual health.**

Respectfully,

Advocates for Youth
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
AIDS Resource Center Ohio
AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Civil Liberties Union

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Medical Student Association
Answer, Rutgers University
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Boulder Valley Women's Health Center
Business and Professional Women/Arizona
California Association of School Health Educators
Campus Progress
Cascade AIDS Project
Center for Health Training
Center for Research Strategies
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Chicago Abortion Fund
Choice USA
Civil Liberties and Public Policy
Clinica Sierra Vista
Colorado AIDS Project
Columbia/Boone Co. Dept. of Public Health & Human Services
Dedicated Individually to Valiantly Assist Inc. (DIVA)
DuPage County NOW
Edgerton Women's Health Center
EyesOpenIowa: Your Connection To Adolescent Sexual Health
Family Planning Council
Feminist Majority Foundation
Fresno Barrios Unidos
Friends of Project 10 Inc.
Georgia Parents for Responsible Health Education
Global Justice Institute
Harlem United Community AIDS Center, Inc.
Hastings College PHIVE-O (Peer HIV Education Organization)
Hawaii Youth Services Network
Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County
Healthy Teen Network
Healthy Youth Alliance
Healthy Youth Development- Prevention Research Center at Univ of Minnesota
HiTOPS
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
HIVictorious, Inc.
Human Rights Campaign
Illinois American Association of University Women
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH)

Illinois Choice Action Team
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
International Women's Health Coalition
Latino Commission on AIDS
LIGHT Health and Wellness Comprehensive Services, Inc.
Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy
Mendez Consulting Inc.
Metro TeenAIDS
Metropolitan Coalition for Responsible Sex Education
Metropolitan Community Churches
Minnesota AIDS Project
Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting
Mon Amie Event Planning, LLC
NARAL Pro-Choice Colorado
NARAL Pro-Choice Washington
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, Chicago Chapter
National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA)
National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latina Health Network
National Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute
National Organization for Women
National Women's Health Network
New Mexico Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
New Moon Girls
New Morning Foundation
Northern Colorado AIDS Project
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
Partnership Project
Pennsylvania Chapter of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
People For the American Way
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Planned Parenthood of Montana
Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains
Project Inform
Protestants for the Common Good
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Reproductive Health Technologies Project

Rock the Vote
Sexual Health Advocates
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
Sisters Together And Reaching, Inc. (STAR)
Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality
South Carolina Hispanic Outreach
Southwest Women's Law Center
TEEN FUTURES
Teen Pregnancy & Prevention Partnership
Teen Talk Sexuality Education
Texas Freedom Network
The AIDS Institute
The Emily Program
The Family Planning Association of Maine
The Freedom Fund
The Healthy Colorado Youth Alliance
The Woodhull Freedom Foundation
Tri-State Alliance, Inc.
U.S. Positive Women's Network
Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)
United Church of Christ
Wise Guys Program, Children's Home Society of NC

Cc: Members of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health