



Representative Boyd and Members of the House Health Committee:

On behalf of the Ohio Business and Professional Women, I am writing to support the Ohio Prevention First Act (HB 293).

Ohio Business and Professional Women have supported the Ohio Prevention First Act since it was first introduced several years ago. A resolution was passed unanimously at the State Conference of Ohio Business and Professional Women in May of this year. It is reprinted here in demonstration of the tremendous need for the passage of this vital legislation for Ohio citizens.

“Whereas, nearly 50% of all pregnancies in the United States each year are unintended, one of the highest unintended pregnancy rates among industrialized nations. We need common sense solutions to this problem; and

Whereas, reducing the unintended pregnancy rate will reduce the number of abortions. Half of all unintended pregnancies end in abortion. By reducing the number of unintended pregnancies we can safely reduce the number of abortions; and

Whereas, 98% of women will at some point in their lives, use birth control and, in Ohio, 1.3 million women are in need of family planning services; and

Whereas, increased access to emergency contraception (EC) is an effective way to reduce unintended pregnancy and the number of abortions. Approximately 1 in 7 adult women in Ohio have been victims of one or more completed forcible rapes during their lifetime; and

Whereas, in 2006, nearly 27,000 Ohio girls between the ages of 10 and 19 became pregnant, and Ohio has the 28th highest teen pregnancy rate in the U.S. Students deserve honest scientifically proven methods of sexuality education so that they have the life skills to prevent pregnancy when they decide to be sexually active; and

Whereas, 90% of Ohio voters – both Republicans and Democrats –support having access to contraception. This majority includes 83% of self-identified pro-life voters. Further, 64% agreed that increasing access to contraception is more effective in reducing the number of abortions than enacting more restrictive abortion laws; and

Whereas, the Ohio Prevention First Act will:

- Ensure that sexual assault victims have access to emergency contraception and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases in all hospital emergency rooms.

- Require sex education classes to provide students with medically accurate information about abstinence, contraception and condom use as ways to prevent unintended pregnancy and STD's including HIV/AIDS. Sex education programs that do not follow these guidelines are not eligible for state funding.
- Forbid a health insurance company from limiting or excluding coverage for FDA approved prescription contraception if the policy covers other prescription drugs or devices.
- Create a teen pregnancy prevention state task force that would recommend medically accurate and scientifically proven effective programs for reducing Ohio's teen pregnancy rate.
- Require a pharmacy to dispense any prescribed drug, device or over-the-counter medication in stock without delay, consistent with the normal timeframe, and ensure that every licensed pharmacy does not intimidate, threaten or harass it's customers in the delivery of services.
- Require the Department of Health to create and make available on their website, materials to educate medical professionals and the general public about emergency contraception."

Thank you for your work and establishing hearings on the Ohio Prevention First Act. The Ohio Business and Professional Women look forward to the quick action of the House Health Committee to move the Act towards adoption.



Connie M. Allgire
Past State President – 1993-1994
Legislation Chair - 2009-2010