

Dear Activists and Organizers,

You have received Choice USA's California Parental Notification Campaign Kit because of your desire to educate and organize to make changes around reproductive choice issues in your community and on your campus.

The California Parental Notification Campaign Kit was designed to help you defeat Proposition 73 on the California ballot on November 8, 2005. This Campaign Kit, along with the help of Choice USA staff, will provide you with the information and support you need for success. With your help, we can defeat Proposition 73.

Thanks to the intentional and effective efforts of the anti-choice movement to misinform the population at large, access to reproductive health services and information has been eroded. Anti-choice activists and proponents have successfully petitioned to have a measure placed on the ballot that intentionally targets young women who are seeking to obtain an abortion. Proposition 73, or the "Parent's Right to Know Act", would prevent a young woman under the age of 18 from getting an abortion without a parent or guardian first being notified. This proposition seeks to infringe on a minor's right to medical privacy and would effectively prevent young women from getting the medical care they deserve. In response to the current attacks on legal, safe, and effective reproductive health services, Choice USA would like you to join the fight to secure a minor's access to abortion.

Our goal in this campaign is to defeat Proposition 73. With a detailed Voter Action Campaign Plan (included in this Kit), Choice USA is confident that we can defeat this anti-choice legislation through voter education, registration, and mobilization.

Choice USA's priority is to empower young people and students to take action and demand that campus health centers, local clinics, campus and private health plans, and local federal governments make these reproductive health options accessible to all women. This action kit, along with Choice USA's national staff, will provide you with the resources to get your voice heard and win concrete victories.

With your commitment and passion we can ensure that Proposition 73 is defeated, bringing us closer to securing reproductive choice for all women.

In Solidarity,

Crystal Plati,
Executive Director

Maria Moreno,
Field Director

The following is a list of documents included in this kit. These tools will help you in your fight to build electoral power in your community and on your campus. Remember, electoral power in this context is a community based power to promote your policy agenda. Also included are descriptions and suggestions of how each tool relates to the other, building a comprehensive voter action campaign.

- **Voter Registration:** Separated into two main areas, this piece of the Voter Action Kit outlines an overview of voter registration as a tactic for mobilizing people, demonstrates exactly how to run a voter registration drive in 6 steps, and briefly discusses various issues of voter disenfranchisement. Use this section to assist in planning each step to your own voter registration drives!
- **Voter Education:** Voters must be able to make informed decisions when participating in elections. This section gives a clear overview of tactics your group can use to educate voters on the issues.
- **Voter Turn-out:** Get out the Vote! Key in exercising electoral power, there are many specific aspects of a voter turn out drive that cannot be overlooked. This section lays them out in detail to help you get out the voters you have registered!
- **Press Advisory:** This press advisory, “Replay of Election Chaos in Florida Inexcusable-State and Local Officials Must Act Today to Prevent Widespread Disenfranchisement,” demonstrates voter turn out and protection tactics by various organizations in Florida. It can be used as a model to help you write press advisories for your own events, and press releases for your victories.
- **California Voter Guide:** First and foremost, voters need to know how and where to register to vote. This section provides California residents with the basic information needed to register themselves and others to vote. It includes a county by county breakdown of polling locations as well as the numbers to call for more information.
- **Proposition 73 Fact Sheet:** This thorough question/answer FAQ sheet provided by NARAL will arm voters with the information necessary to make an informed decision on Proposition 73.
- **Parental Involvement Statistical Information:** This section explores the question, “What can California learn from the experiences of other states?” Written by the Bixby Center for Reproductive Health Research & Policy, this short packet focuses on parental involvement legislation across the country and details current laws that limit minor’s access to abortion. Consequently, it highlights research on parent/daughter communication about abortion decisions and the effects of parental involvement requirements on abortion rates.
- **Involving Parents in Reproductive Health Decisions sheet:** Divided into three sections, this sheet created by the California Adolescent Health Collaborative provides: 1) a brief background of the Parental Notification discussion; 2) key points of the issue; and 3) policy recommendations intended to reduce teenage pregnancy and promote healthy communication.
- **“Jane Goes to the Doctor” scenario:** This “what if” scenario crafted by the ACLU charts the difficult series of steps that a young girl has to endure under Parental Notification laws.

VOTER REGISTRATION

The registration piece of a voter action campaign is a mobilization tactic. As in all mobilization tactics, you want to build a list; in this case, a list of registered voters to shuttle out to the polls. These are also registered voters you can educate throughout the rest of the year with your larger pro-choice campaigns after the elections. Voter registration should be used as a tactic to build your organization's membership as well as your electoral power.

A QUICK DISCLAIMER

Choice USA is a 501(c)(3) organization which means we cannot take a position for or against a candidate. Rest assured you can participate in a voter action campaign without violating Choice USA's tax-exempt status, just as long as all of your activities are conducted in a non-partisan way. This means that you must register voters regardless of their views or their preferences for a particular party or candidate. It also means that you cannot pass out information on reproductive choice or specifically how a candidate views choice in conjunction with voter registration. You must keep your voter registration programming and choice events completely separate.

Keep the following in mind:

DO'S AND DON'TS

FOR 501(C)(3) VOTER REGISTRATION AND GOTV

Helping people to register to vote and exercise that right are part of the important work that 501(c)(3) organizations can do to help our society. But 501(c)(3)s must be careful to comply with the law by ensuring that they don't do anything that appears to support or oppose any candidate or political party. The following simple tips can help your 501(c)(3) conduct an effect voter registration or get-out-the-vote (GOTV) effort that complies with the law:

DO...

- Target your voter registration and GOTV efforts to people and communities that have historically been ignored or shut out of the political process.
- Make any voter registration help or help getting to the polls that you offer available to everyone, regardless of their political views or their views on reproductive rights.
- Post a sign at any voter registration table telling people that you will help all eligible persons to vote, regardless of their political views.
- Remind people about the many issues that affect their lives about which elected officials make decisions.
- Remind people about the many elections that have been decided by just a few votes.
- Remind people about how many people have fought and died to protect the right to vote.

DON'T...

- Suggest which candidate or political party people should support.
- Ask about party affiliation or otherwise attempt to determine what candidates people are likely to support before offering to register them or help them get to the polls.
- Compare, criticize, or endorse the candidates' positions on the issue of choice or any other single issue.
- Use pro-choice messages in any voter registration or GOTV effort.
- Talk only about reproductive rights and no other issues in your voter registration or GOTV effort.
- Target voter registration or GOTV efforts to districts represented by elected officials who are particular opponents or allies of your organization's policy agenda.
- Target voter registration or GOTV efforts to lists of people provided by political parties, PACs, or organizations that support or oppose candidates.

If you have questions about what you can or can't do, contact Choice USA at 202-965-7700.

VOTING BLOCS

Electoral power, a community or campus based power that promotes your policy agenda, is most effective when it comes in blocs. The more young active voters are organized in a particular area, the more youth electoral power that exists there.

Voting blocs exist along so many lines: gender, race, religion, age, marginalized and political affiliation for instance. As a youth focused organization, Choice USA works to build voter bases amongst youth. Your organization should seek out other campus groups that work towards the interests of historically underrepresented communities, not only to strengthen your voting power base, but to guarantee that people who are often disenfranchised have the opportunity to vote. In the long run, this will help you build enduring relationships and coalitions.

When organizing a voter action campaign at your school or in your community, your organization may wish to register people in a manner that will build geographical voting blocs. You should note that in addition to remaining unbiased towards the candidates, nonprofit organizations with a 501(c)(3) tax status cannot target potential voters based on districts where candidates they eventually hope to influence are running for office. However, if you are not running a campaign on behalf of Choice USA or any other nonprofit with this requirement, registering voters in geographical voting blocs can be highly beneficial.

This may mean you will want to focus on students living on campus (especially if your campus constitutes one voting district), or even, students living in a particular group of dorms and apartment complexes if your campus is divided between election districts. You may decide to focus your efforts on a district or ward where many young workers and young professionals live. It all depends on how voting districts are organized in your community and where you wish to build strong geographical voting blocs.

There are also instances when you are trying to persuade decision makers outside the reach of your school or community, in your state legislature or in Congress. In these instances, campus groups may find it more strategic to register student voters within the districts they are originally from. In any case, the choice to register students according to their campus address or permanent address is a strategic decision, and should not be made randomly.

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES IN 6 STEPS

1. Establish a clear timeline.

In order to use your time most efficiently, you must develop a clear timeline early on. For starters, find out when the voter registration deadline is along with other election laws in your state. Refer to the directory in this kit to locate the number of your state elections offices. Having a clear timeline will also help you pinpoint certain dates, such as holidays and national days of action in which you may want to participate. Stay tuned to Choice USA's web site, www.choiceusa.org, for our **National On-Line Voter Registration Day!**

2. Recruit volunteers and/or staff to help run the campaign.

In professional voter action campaigns, staff members are hired to ensure that every aspect of the registration drive is run properly. As youth and students, we are usually limited to volunteers. Volunteers play a vital role in any activity, but are most important in a voter registration drive. Don't be afraid to look to other organizations for volunteers. Consider it another good coalition building opportunity. All organizations should understand the importance of registering young people to vote.

Before requesting volunteers, you need to know what tasks will be delegated to them. Listed are suggested positions

- **Volunteer Coordinators** should oversee the entire voter registration volunteer effort, including training all new volunteers and compiling the registration forms into a list or database. This position also builds leadership among members that may not already have a regularly assigned position within the group.

- **Elections Board Liaisons** must oversee and carry out the process of getting registration forms into elections offices. This task must be delegated to a person who has demonstrated that they are reliable. These are the people who review the forms each night to ensure they have been filled in properly, and must promptly send them in to the state elections office. Again, always check the laws of your state before sending in voter registration forms to ensure that they aren't returned for reasons that could have been easily prevented.

- You will need **Site Captains** to be in charge of each location (dorm, apartment complex, organization, general areas), keeping up with how many voters you registered there. This position ensures that there is no overlap (that people are not asked twice to register). These are also the people keeping track of the numbers, motivating your volunteers and guaranteeing that you reach your registration goals.

- Recruit **Canvassers** to go door-to-door, registering people directly. This can be an excellent entry level task for those just joining your organization or volunteering just for this activity. It can also serve to brush up on canvassing skills for the more seasoned organizers.

Once your volunteers have completed their tasks, be sure to thank them. Either send out thank you cards, or host a small gathering to show your appreciation. This will ensure that they come back and volunteer again!

3. Build campaign organization.

Determine how many students you wish to turn out, and register FOUR TIMES as many. There are many reasons that students do not turn out to vote, some of which we cannot yet control. Thus, you should overshoot your turn out goal with the number of voters you wish to register.

At this point, you should already know where your constituents are located: in dorms, organizational meetings, apartment complexes, academic buildings, etc. Estimate how many students you think you could register at each location. You should also plan actions and events where pro-choice youth and students can attend and register.

Establish a system in which voter registration forms are delivered to the appropriate state elections office.

Make sure you have all of the materials you will need, such as voter registration forms, clipboards, pens, and signs that say you will register people regardless of their views or political party affiliation. And always remember to keep your usual pro-choice education materials separate from your voter registration supplies.

4. Register voters!

Thorough voter registration is the foundation for a good voter action campaign; initially preparing youth and students to exercise their right to vote.

One classic organizing tactic is going door-to-door, or “*canvassing*”. This gives you the opportunity to talk to individuals one-on-one about the importance of their vote. Be sure that volunteers have a general script outlined to ensure that they cover the essentials about your organization’s voter registration efforts, and your willingness to register anyone to vote. It is often helpful to practice with your volunteers so they feel comfortable canvassing door-to-door.

Another common voter registration tactic consists of *tabling* in the main area of your campus. In tabling, you should have people watching your table, passing out information and answering questions students have. At the same time, you should also have canvassers combing the area with clipboards registering people to. This is often called “*site registration*”. Canvassers comb a specific site and attempt to register anyone and everyone that passes through the site. Choice USA runs extensive site registration drives in some areas and can help you run one in your community as well.

For more information on site registration efforts, e-mail action@choiceusa.org or call toll free 1-888-784-4494.

Again, if you are running a voter action campaign on behalf of Choice USA or any other organization with a 501(c)(3) tax status, do not forget to keep your usual pro-choice education materials and activities separate of these voter registration efforts.

Here, you should also note Choice USA’s *on-line voter registration*, which allows you to register on the internet. Be sure to note your state’s registration deadline, and allow 1 week plus mail time for Choice USA to process the forms and send them back to be signed. On-line voter registration may be especially helpful for smaller organizations that do not have the capacity to have volunteers in every location. You may wish to set up in public libraries or university computer labs where you can reach the maximum amount of youth and students, or post signs (see sample flyer) advertising Choice USA’s web site to register. In schools where students have internet access in their rooms, you can refer them to the Choice USA web site, www.choiceusa.org, where they can **register directly!**

But do not use this as an excuse not to go door-to-door, and you should continue to add these new voters to your list in order to turn them out to the polls on Election Day.

5. Maintain a comprehensive list of your newly registered voters.

Your volunteer coordinators should be in charge of this effort. *Nonetheless, this task is important enough to list separately.* As a mobilization tactic, the fundamental element of voter registration is building a list to refer back to later. These newly registered voters establish larger voting blocs, build your organization's voting powerⁱ, and may be contacted to turn out during future elections. You may also wish to alert the media of how many new voters you registered after your registration drive is complete. (See sample press advisory.)

6. Mail voter registration forms to the appropriate elections office.

All paper forms must be mailed in to your state elections office BEFORE the registration deadline. To be safe, plan on mailing your last voter registration form in 7-10 days before this date. If your organization is using this most common federal registration formⁱⁱ, be sure your state elections office accepts first. Also find out if you can mail forms in bulk or if they must be mailed in individually. If you are working specifically on a Choice USA voter action campaign and sending your forms into our national office, we will already be working with your state elections office to ensure your forms are sent in properly.

ⁱ As you may have already guessed, voting power is used interchangeably with electoral power and in this context refers to a community-based power to promote a policy agenda.

ⁱⁱ **New Hampshire** town and city clerks will accept this application only as a request for their own mail-in absentee voter registration form.

North Dakota does not have voter registration.

Wyoming cannot accept this form under State law.

VOTER EDUCATION

It is not enough to simply register voters. They must be empowered to make an informed decision on Election Day. The new voters you register may not have thought about how public policy decisions made by elected officials affect their reproductive choices. Since these tactics must be kept separate you're your voter registration and GOTV efforts, your organization must provide these voters with information about their reproductive freedom year round, updating them on current issues and legislation surrounding women's right to choose, so they know exactly what questions to ask.

Further, you must use voter education to excite your voter base about voting by not only educating them on the issues, but by also giving them concrete, realistic turn out goals to reach. Your voters must know that their votes really do count and have a concrete value. Below are key education tactics you can use in informing your voters.

VOTER GUIDES

A voter guide is best used to get people to ask the right questions. New voters will be seeking to know what "the issues" are before Election Day. You must ensure that your issues are among them. Voter guides must be written in a clear, but brief format. The goal is to catch the attention of the voter long enough for them to grasp your issue, and short enough that they do not get bored or overwhelmed. Further, voter guides must be written in language that is easily understandable, and geared towards your target audience. In some communities, it may be necessary to publish your voter guide in more than one language. Voter guides should summarize current issues in a way that is precise and comprehensible to the constituents you wish to reach. Use the task of creating the voter guide to develop leadership within your organization. However if you are organizing a Choice USA campaign, or working with any other 501 c(3), be sure not to refer to the platforms of particular candidates in writing your voter guide, and make sure a broad range of issues are addressed. This is a perfect way to build strong coalitions in your community or at your school.

PUBLIC FORUMS

A public forum can come in just about any shape or form. As youth in the community and students at school, it is often more within our experience to organize a speak-out rather than a more traditional public forum. Both events

allow everyday people to testify how various issues have affected them personally. This tactic represents a much more interactive opportunity to share information on reproductive choice, and is often very empowering for the new voters who participate.

CANDIDATE DEBATES

Once your constituents have an overview of the issues surrounding reproductive rights, they are equipped to learn about candidates' stances on those issues. Most non-profit organizations cannot do this without risking their tax-exempt status. As discussed in the voter registration section, organizations with a 501(c) (3) tax status cannot even inform you about where nonincumbent candidates stand on the issues. We can, however, create a broad forum in which candidates tell us themselves what their positions are. Hosting a candidate debate forces candidates and the broader public to make your issues and others a priority. This tactic is another good way to build relationships with other organizations on campus that may also desire a forum for candidates to address their interests. Building coalitions with a broad range of groups also guarantees that the candidate debate will cover a broad range of issues, and will keep your group within the guidelines to keep its 501(c) (3) status.

LEAFLETING

This is a classic tool to quickly get a message across to voters, usually in some entertaining way that can be remembered. Leafleting is generally done before a big event, or just before Election Day. It can remind voters of the upcoming election, the issues, and where their polls are located. But make sure your leaflets do not show a bias towards any candidate if you are keeping with the 501(c) (3) guidelines.

There are other voter education tactics we did not cover here, but we have offered some of the basics. The goal is to educate voters to make informed decisions on Election Day, and to help them feel more involved in the process. The better youth and students feel about voting the first time, the more likely they are to vote again.

As always, never forget the "Do's and Don'ts" for 501(c) (3) organizations!

VOTER TURNOUT

Now, you have registered your constituents to vote, hopefully into powerful voting blocs, and you have educated them on the issues. But it is not enough to tell decision-makers how many voters you registered. The only way to ensure sweat build-up under their collar is to inform them of how many voters you turned out on Election Day. Below is a quick guide to help you 'get out the vote' on your campus and in your community!

VOTER TURN OUT IN 5 STEPS

1. Establish a clear timeline.

Just like in voter registration drives, a clear timeline is the basis for good voter turn out. Though this time line may seem much shorter, it is still quite important. There are many things your organization can do weeks before Election Day to remind your constituents to vote. In general, however, the actual voter turn out *drive* takes approximately 3 days: Election Day and the 2 days before it. In the United States, Election Day generally falls on a Tuesday. Thus, your organization should be mobilizing voters on Sunday night, Monday, and on Tuesday during polling.

Find out exactly what time the polls will be open on Election Day. You and your volunteers should be prepared to mobilize voters at least 1 hour before the first poll opens, and continue mobilizing them up until the last poll closes.

You should adjust your timeline in areas where your state allows for voting on more than one day.

2. Recruit volunteers or staff to help run the campaign.

After running an intense voter registration and voter education campaign, it may be difficult to recruit the same volunteers to work on voter turn out. You do not want to burn them out! To avoid this, be sure to keep this in mind when initially recruiting volunteers. Have some hold back at the beginning, so they can work harder during your voter turn out activities.

As before, there are specific tasks you will need volunteers for. Listed are suggested positions:

- **Volunteer Coordinators** should oversee the entire voter turn out volunteer effort, including training all new volunteers and keeping track of how many times each of your registered voters has been contacted about Election Day. Again, this position also builds leadership among members that may not already have a regularly assigned position within the group.
- **Legal Liaisons** must be in contact with legal and non-profit organizations to report voter disenfranchisement. If voters are turned away unfairly, these volunteers should be on top of it, and fighting to allow these people a vote before the polls close. This is often a good opportunity for you to work with other organizations on campus, and even graduate/professional students who may be better trained to address these issues on site.
- **Phone bankers** contact voters each night before the election, and on Election Day to get voters to the polls. If you have enough phone bankers and phones, you may be able to call through an entire list twice to first remind them to vote, and second to get a good count of how many people you registered actually voted.
- You will need **Site Captains** to be in charge of each location (dorm, apartment complex, organization, general areas), keeping up with how many voters you turned out there. These are also the people keeping track of numbers, motivating your volunteers and guaranteeing that you reach your mobilization goals.
- Last, but not least, recruit **Mobilizers** to actually storm the residential halls, knocking on each door and parading people to the polls. Mobilizers should also wear signs on campus buses that pick up in their designated voter areas, taking people that way. For larger organizations, you may wish to rent a van for mobilizers to drive constituents to the polls, or get creative and hold a bike race to the polls during lunch hours. Again, these volunteers should have check off sheets to keep track of who has voted from their locations.

3. Build campaign organization.

Now you must establish a system, such as phone banking, to remind your newly registered voters of Election Day, giving them logistical details such as where their poll site is located and what time it is open. You could also have a team working with the student newspaper to include it in their Election Day edition.

On Election Day, you must literally get these voters out to the polls! Your organization should delegate responsibility for every registered voter. Each site captain should be responsible for mobilizing an equal amount of voters to the polls. Follow this simple formula:

Take the total number of people your organization registered and divide it by the number of volunteers you have signed up for Election Day.

Whether by car, parade, bus, or bike, your volunteers must work to mobilize their share of voters to the polls. The easiest way to do this is by delegating locations as well as specific numbers. Your volunteers should be accountable for each of the geographic region on your list.

On Election Day, your mobilizers should have check off sheets to account for people that actually voted. On the afternoon of the same day, those that have not yet been checked off should be contacted and urged to the polls.

Also have a way to observe the Elections yourselves. Though you may not be allowed to have an observer in the room while poll workers are counting votes, you can keep an eye on all other processes. You may even want to have table set up outside of the polls with signs stating, "Did you get turned away from voting?" in addition to having poll watchers just so you can get the most comprehensive information on what happened at the polls. Contact local non-profit organizations that specifically understand what to do when pollsters illegally turn away voters, and establish good Election Day communications with them in case you see such acts. People for the American Way is a good organization to contact for Election Day help.ⁱ

At the end of the day, be sure to bring all of your recruits together and total up how many voters each one of them believes she/he got to the polls, and compare this to the number of total voters reported on the news after the final poll closes. Divide your total voter turn out by the entire voter turn out. Now, you can give decision-makers the percentage of voters you turned out on Election Day in a

strategic display of electoral power; the community-based power to promote your policy agenda.

4. Get Out the Vote!

It is now time to employ the creative tactics you dreamed up to get people to the polls. Below are some traditional voter turn out tactics that can be further developed to help get out the vote.

The basics of *phone banking* were addressed earlier. Nonetheless, it is one of the most effective voter turnout tactics there is. Most students are appreciative of the reminder to vote, and will request details on when and where. Set phone banking hours as best you can, in a way that will catch the most people at home without interrupting their meal or sleep. It is also helpful to have a shorter script phone bankers can use when leaving voicemails—should you decide to leave them.

Again, *canvassing* gives mobilizers the opportunity to address voters in person, and further testify to the importance of voting. Students will be more inclined to vote if someone shows up at their door displaying an interest in their empowerment. Here, a well-developed script is not as necessary, although you may wish to practice what to say if voters need extra encouragement to vote.

Remember when writing your phone banking or canvassing script, if you are working with a 501(c)(3) organization, it is okay to say:

"Do you care about women's rights, healthcare, education, jobs, and the environment? Then vote next Tuesday! Your choices matter!"

But it is not okay to say:

"Vote pro-choice!"

Work with your school newspaper to get them to advertise *Election Day logistics*. Most of the time, newspapers are covering this anyway, but you should be sure.

Give voters a ride to the polls, or, as mentioned earlier, transport them there as best you can, via bus, bike, or marching in a parade. Make voting an exciting activity that everyone is doing, and encourage students to join the bandwagon.

Party at the Polls! Create a festival environment around polling sites. Have local and student performers attend.

This may entice constituents who would not normally vote, or who have forgotten to vote.

All of these are merely suggestions, and you should encourage your members to come up with new, creative ideas for getting voters out to the polls.

5. Host an Election Party and Watch the Results Come in!

Celebrate with your voter action campaign team. Compile your mobilization results, and compare them to what is reported on the news so you can report the percentage of voters you turned out.

Invite new voters who expressed interest in your organization, and announce upcoming events at the party.

Once Election Day is over, e-mail Choice USA (action@choiceusa.org) to let us know how you did. We will compile voter turn out from all our affiliates, and report back the overall totals of all of our local members so you can see what you contributed to!

Congratulations!

You have finished your voter action campaign, and can continue to move on with your broader, issue-based organizing with the results of your voter action efforts!

ⁱ See the Voter Disenfranchisement handout for contact information.

VOTER DISENFRANCHISEMENT

Democracy is a wonderful ideal, but our system is imperfect. Millions of United States residents are barred from voting every year, some legally and others illegally. In this section, we hope to demonstrate how to use your voter action campaign to empower those who have been disenfranchised from electoral politics.

YOUTH

Legislators, media critics and most popular opinion polls harp on the myth that “young people don’t vote”. They often fail to mention that youth are rarely given the tools to vote. Young people of voting age are typically left out of major political discussions, and sometimes even discouraged from engaging in political activity. Candidates do not cater to the interests of the nation’s youth anymore, possibly because the interests of youth conflict with their own. Also, youth rarely have the funds to financially support candidates and elected officials, and for some officials money takes priority. Thus, we must engage our peers in the electoral process through our voter action campaigns, and in other legislative reproductive choice actions throughout the year, so youth voices can be heard and youth power can be concentrated.

Further, we cannot forget those of us under the legal voting age. People under the age of 18 have gone through a process of disempowerment by being discouraged to question what they are taught in school, what they learn on television, and what they read in textbooks. Young people are not taught that they should work to build power, or that they should organize each other to have a collective voice. It is our responsibility as young organizers to include non-voting youth in our process of planning and implementing voter action campaigns. Until we win the right to vote for youth under the age of 18, we can help them mobilize their parents, older siblings and anyone else of voting age. Further, elected officials will hear the voices of youth under 18, and recognize them as future voters to be reckoned with.

NON-CITIZENS

It is well known that many people living within the United States are not citizens, and thus cannot vote. Immigration laws often make it incredibly difficult for these residents - and even their children- to gain citizenship, even after working for years within the country. For these groups, Election Day may not immediately seem like such an empowering time of year. However, non-citizens still have

the right to educate and mobilize others in order to get them to the polls. Encourage them to participate in your voter action campaign, and include them in post-election visits with representatives. Also involve them within your organization in general, to make sure a broad range of perspectives are represented when determining your campaign strategies. Limits on reproductive freedoms come in many forms, and some are less obvious than others.

CONVICTED FELONS

Millions of Americans and American immigrants currently sit behind bars, and millions more have been released as convicted felons. During the Reagan Administration, the “War on Drugs” had the energy and funding to imprison hundreds of thousands of men and women for non-violent crimes. Most of these prisoners are not allowed to vote, even after they have served their time and returned to civil society. Many prisoners, women in particular, experience inhumane reproductive health treatment while behind bars, even having to give birth in chains. It is important for us to consider these non-voters as well in our organizing efforts, educating new voters on their struggle, and advocating for improved voting laws. You can also separately send prisoners information about reproductive choice while incarcerated, so they have the tools they need to understand when their reproductive rights are violated. For more help, go to the web site of Justice NOW at www.jnow.org.

DISENFRANCHISEMENT FOR NO REASON AT ALL

Last, it is common to hear horror stories of registered voters being turned away from the polls for nothing at all. Organizations that aim to keep some voters away from the polls have gone so far as to send postcards telling southern Black voters they could go to jail for attempting to vote at the wrong polling site, and many voters have arrived at the polls only to find that their name had been “cleared” from the list.

To defend against this, make sure all registration forms are filled in correctly, and notify officials if you do not receive a registered voter notice within a month of the Election Day. Make sure the voters you registered know where their polling site is, and take their registered voter certification with them to the polls. Last, if you hear of any specific instances of attempted voter disenfranchisement, call the Choice USA offices toll free at (888) 784-4494, or contact People for the American Way at (202) 467-4999.

MEDIA ADVISORY

People for the American Way Foundation
For Immediate Release
September 10, 2002

REPLAY OF ELECTION CHAOS IN FLORIDA INEXCUSABLE STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS MUST ACT TODAY TO PREVENT WIDESPREAD DISENFRANCHISEMENT

3:00 p.m. press conference in Ft. Lauderdale

After the November 2000 fiasco, People For the American Way Foundation, the NAACP, the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the Service Employees International Union and other partners created the Election Protection program to educate voters about their rights, monitor polling problems, and provide same-day legal assistance.

Election Protection monitors in Florida are reporting widespread problems that are preventing people from casting their votes. Our hotline in Broward County is being overwhelmed with reports. Major problems have been reported in Miami-Dade and Duval County. We have received reports of polls not open on time, computers not working, voters being denied paper ballots as alternatives, polling places without ballots for the Democratic primary. In Miami-Dade, computers were reportedly still not working by late morning in a number of precincts, and no paper ballots were available. These problems have reportedly resulted in many people being turned away when they tried to vote this morning.

If these reports are true, it is unbelievable and inexcusable that after the fiasco in November 2000, Florida officials – from Governor Bush to county election supervisors – did not do everything possible to prevent this kind of disenfranchisement from happening again.

Election Protection partners on the ground in Broward County will hold a press conference at 3:00 p.m. today at the local NAACP headquarters at 1409 Sistrunk Blvd. to call for immediate action by Governor Jeb Bush, other state officials, and county election supervisors to extend voting hours and ensure that voters are not prevented from voting or having their votes counted.

Florida Election Protection Program Contact numbers:

Broward County

(954) 764-7604 / (850) 980-3340

Miami-Dade

(305) 573-7329

For more information or to reach attorneys or field coordinators working in these locations, call 202-467-4999 or 202-415-4939.

Sample Opinion / Editorial Piece for Campus Papers

Just the facts: Prop 73 an attack on young people

While the pundits are predicting low turnout in the November 8th special election, students and young people have a chance to make a huge difference. One issue of special concern is Proposition 73, a measure that would force women under 18 to notify a parent before obtaining an abortion.

In the face of the research and facts, the motives of Proposition 73's proponents – a small group of wealthy, conservative extremists – become clear. They don't care about improving family communication, reducing teen pregnancy, or ensuring access to reproductive health care. This campaign is part of a much larger effort to whittle away a woman's right to make decisions about her body and health. The attack is targeted specifically at young people, who they don't think have the power or interest to fight back.

It is up to us to prove them wrong on November 8th. Now is the time to learn the story and facts behind this issue, and organize to make sure the measure is defeated.

Unfortunately, California would not be the first state to pass such a law, and there are plenty of cases that illustrate the potential impacts. Research on states with notification laws shows little or no effect on the number of abortions. It even suggests that there is no increase in the rates at which parents are informed. Instead, young women are forced to travel to other states, navigate a complicated legal process, or wait longer before receiving care, posing increased health risks.

Proposition 73 would make obtaining reproductive care in California very complicated. In the event that a young woman sought an abortion, the doctor would have to mail or hand deliver various forms to her parents. Then, once the forms were served, a 48-hour waiting period would have to pass before the abortion was performed. Afterward, the doctor would be required to file even more papers with the government.

The only way around the notification requirement would be to opt for the intimidating and time-consuming process of asking a judge for a waiver. Experiences in other states has shown that courts may not be prepared to handle such requests, and that judges and administrative staff can be uninformed or obstructive in the process.

Not only would the measure place undue barriers between young women and essential health care, it wouldn't change the way families communicate about sex. Studies have shown that a majority of women under 18 who have abortions *already* involve their parents in the decisions. Those who don't communicate with their parents often have valid reasons, such as a history of family violence or fear of being kicked out of the house.

Nobody disputes that reducing the number of unintended pregnancies is an effective way to limit the need for abortion. California has been at the head of the pack in terms of reducing teen births, with an amazing 40% drop in the last 10 years.

Research shows that encouraging family communication about sex is a very effective way to reduce unintended teen pregnancies. California's success has come from including an emphasis on communication between parents and children in its comprehensive teen pregnancy prevention programs—ones that should be continued and strengthened as *real* solutions, not ineffective and destructive notification mandates.

The anti-choice movement's targeting of young people today could easily lead to broader attacks in the future. Whether we care about our sisters and friends, or worry about our own reproductive rights in the future, the choice is clear: vote NO on Proposition 73 on November 8.

Choice USA has teamed up with California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom, ACLU of Northern California, Nara Pro-Choice California, Planned Parenthood, and many other organizations as part of the Campaign for Teen Safety to fight this proposition. Visit www.choiceusa.org or contact _____ on your campus to get involved.

November 8th, 2005 Special Statewide Election Information

How to Register to Vote

To register, you'll need to complete a voter registration form, sometimes called an affidavit. There are many ways to get the form:

-Pick up a form in person at any number of public offices (library, DMV, post office, county election office, city clerk, etc.)

-Call 1-800-345-VOTE to request a form be mailed to you

-Call your county election office to request a form be mailed to you

-Download a form in English or Spanish from the Secretary of State's web site:

<http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/english.pdf>

-Fill out the online registration form at the Secretary of State's web site (it will be printed and mailed to you for your signature) <http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/votereg1.html>

-Vote Absentee:

If you are a US citizen and are going to be overseas or if you are in the military and wish to vote absentee, there are special provisions for you to register and receive an overseas absentee ballot. To do this you may need to complete a "Federal Post Card Registration and Absentee Ballot Request," and mail it to your local county elections official.

Registered voters may apply for an absentee ballot, by mail, for the November 8, 2005, Election between October 10, 2005 and November 1, 2005. Applications must be submitted to the county elections officials no later than 5 p.m. on November 1, 2005.

For more information about becoming an Absentee Voter or a Permanent Absentee voter, visit online at: http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_m.htm.

Statement of Distribution Form for Voter Registration Cards

Additionally, many campaigns and political parties send out staff and volunteers to register voters at malls and other public places. You may request a voter registration form from these people too. The law requires them to supply you with a form regardless of which political party you want to register with, so don't be misled by signs that say "Republicans Register Here" or "Democrats Register Here". You can also register to vote when you renew your driver's license with the DMV.

Any individual, group or organization requesting 50 or more voter registration cards from the Secretary of State's Office must complete and submit a Statement of Distribution form and a plan of distribution to the Secretary of State. The Statement of Distribution Form can be found at: <http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/vrdis.pdf>.

The statement and plan of distribution can either be mailed or faxed to:

California Secretary of State
Elections Division
1500 11th Street, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
FAX: (916) 653-3214

Upon receiving a completed request by fax or mail, the Elections Division will process the request within 48 hours. For additional assistance, please contact the Secretary of State's Elections Division at (916) 657-2166.

When to Re-Register to Vote

You will need to re-register to vote when:

- You move
- You change your name
- You change your political party affiliation

Additional Assistance

For additional assistance with voter registration, please contact the Secretary of State's office at any of the following toll-free numbers:

- English: 1-800-345-VOTE
- Spanish: 1-800-232-VOTA
- Chinese: 1-800-339-2857
- Vietnamese: 1-800-339-8163
- Japanese: 1-800-339-2865
- Tagalog: 1-800-339-2957
- Korean: 1-866-575-1558

Don't Forget...Voter Registration Deadline is October 24th!

<http://www.calvoter.org/>

http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_ppl.htm

Polling Place Lookup – November 8, 2005 Special Statewide Election

The polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on November 8, 2005 (Election Day).

To find your polling place, you can contact your local elections office from the information listed below or our Voter Assistance Hotline at 1-800-345-VOTE on November 7 and 8, 2005, for polling place information.

Alameda (01)

1225 Fallon Street, Room G-1
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 663-VOTE (8683)
www.smartvoter.org/ca/alm/

Alpine (02)

P O Box 158
Markleeville, CA 96120
(530) 694-2281
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Amador (03)

500 Argonaut Lane
Jackson, CA 95642
(209) 223-6465
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Butte (04)

25 County Center Drive
Oroville, CA 95965
(530) 538-7761 or 1-800-894-7761
<http://clerk-recorder.buttecounty.net>

Calaveras (05)

891 Mountain Ranch Road
San Andreas, CA 95249
(209) 754-6376
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Colusa (06)

546 Jay Street
Colusa, CA 95932
(530) 458-0500
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Contra Costa (07)

524 Main Street
Martinez, CA 94553
(925) 646-4166
www.co.contra-costa.ca.us/depart/elect/root1102/pollplac.htm
www.smartvoter.org/2004/11/02/ca/cc/

Del Norte (08)

981 H Street, Room 160
Crescent City, CA 95531
(707) 465-0383
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

El Dorado (09)

2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-7480
<http://elections.co.el-dorado.ca.us/lookup.fwx>
www.smartvoter.org/ca/ed/

Fresno (10)

2221 Kern Street
Fresno, CA 93721
(559) 488-3246
www.co.fresno.ca.us/2850/root1102/pollplac.htm
www.smartvoter.org/ca/fr/

Glenn (11)

516 W. Sycamore Street, 2nd Floor
Willows, CA 95988
(530) 934-6414 or (530) 934-6402
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Humboldt (12)

3033 H Street, Room 20
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 445-7678 or (707) 445-7481
www.smartvoter.org/ca/hm/

Imperial (13)

940 Main Street, Suite 202
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 482-4226
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Inyo (14)

168 North Edwards
Independence, CA 93526
(760) 878-0224
No Polling Place Look-up Available

Kern (15)

1115 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 868-3590
www.smartvoter.org

Kings (16)

1400 West Lacey Blvd.
Hanford, CA 93230
(559) 582-3211 ext. 4890
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Lake (17)

255 North Forbes Street, Rm 209
Lakeport, CA 95453-4748
(707) 263-2372
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Lassen (18)

220 South Lassen Street, Suite 5
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 251-8217
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Los Angeles (19)

12400 Imperial Hwy.
Norwalk, CA 90650-8350
(800) 815-2666
(800) 481-8683
<http://lavote.net/locator>

Madera (20)

209 West Yosemite Avenue
Madera, CA 93637
(559) 675-7720
<http://www.madera-county.com>

Marin (21)

3501 Civic Center, Room 152
San Rafael, CA 94913-3904
(415) 499-6456
<http://gisprod1.co.marin.ca.us/Voterpolls/viewer.htm>
www.smartvoter.org/ca/mrn/

Mariposa (22)

4982 10th Street
P.O. Box 247
Mariposa, CA 95338
(209) 966-2007

Mendocino (23)

501 Low Gap Rd., Rm. 1020
Ukiah, CA 95482
(707) 463-4370 or (707) 463-4372
or outside Ukiah area, 1-800-991-5441 (when prompted dial 4370, 4371, or 4372)
www.smartvoter.org/ca/mnd/

Merced (24)

2222 "M" Street, Room 14
Merced, CA 95340
(209) 385-7541
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Modoc (25)

204 Court Street
Alturas, CA 96101-0131
(530) 233-6201
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Mono (26)

Bryant Street - Annex II
Bridgeport, CA 93517
(760) 932-5537 or (760) 932-5532
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Monterey (27)

1370 South Main Street #B
Salinas, CA 93901
(831) 796-1499
www.smartvoter.org/ca/mnt

Napa (28)

900 Coombs Street, Suite 256
Napa, CA 94559-2946
(707) 253-4321
www.co.napa.ca.us/living/apps/pollocator

Nevada (29)

10433 Willow Valley Rd., Suite E
Nevada City, CA 95959
(530) 265-1298
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Orange (30)

1300 South Grand Ave., Bldg. C
Santa Ana, CA 92705
(714) 567-7600
www.oc.ca.gov/election/polling/polling.htm
www.smartvoter.org/ca/or

Placer (31)

2954 Richardson Drive
Auburn, CA 95603
(530) 886-5650
www.placer.ca.gov/clerk/elections/pollplace/pollplac.htm

Plumas (32)

520 Main Street, Room 102
Quincy, CA 95971
(530) 283-6256
www.countyofplumas.com/clerkrecorder/elections/polling_places.htm

Riverside (33)

2724 Gateway Drive
Riverside, CA 92507-0918
(951) 486-7200
www.election.co.riverside.ca.us/polls/root1102/pollplac.htm
www.smartvoter.org/ca/rv/

Sacramento (34)

7000 65th Street
Sacramento, CA 95823-2315
(916) 875-6451
www.pollingplacelookup.saccounty.net/
www.smartvoter.org/ca/sac/

San Benito (35)

Courthouse, Room 206
440 Fifth Street
Hollister, CA 95023-3843
(831) 636-4016
No Polling Place Available

San Bernardino (36)

777 East Rialto Avenue
San Bernardino, CA 92415
(909) 387-8300
gis1.sbcounty.gov/vrlookup/presentation/chameleon/search.asp

San Diego (37)

5201 Ruffin Road, Suite I
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 565-5800
www2.sdcounty.ca.gov/rov/election/polling_query.html
www.smartvoter.org/ca/sd

San Francisco (38)

City Hall - 1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-4375
gispubweb.sfgov.org/website/pollingplace/index.htm
www.smartvoter.org/ca/sf

San Joaquin (39)

212 North San Joaquin Street
Stockton, CA 95202
(209) 468-2892
www.sicrov.org/ballotinfo.html
www.smartvoter.org/ca/sj/

San Luis Obispo (40)

1144 Monterey Street, Ste. A
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
(805) 781-5228
www.sloelections.org/elections/pollinglocations.htm
www.smartvoter.org/ca/slo/

San Mateo (41)

40 Tower Road
San Mateo, California 94402
(650) 312-5222
www.smartvoter.org/ca/sm/

Santa Barbara (42)

Courthouse Basement
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
1-800-SBC-VOTE (1-800-722-8683)
<http://www.sb-democracy.com/elect/resources/root1102/pollplac.htm>
www.smartvoter.org/ca/sba/

Santa Clara (43)

1555 Berger Drive, Bldg. 2
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 299-8683 (VOTE)
www.sccgov.org/rov/polling_form
www.smartvoter.org/ca/scl/

Santa Cruz (44)

701 Ocean Street, Room 210
Santa Cruz, CA 95060-4076
(831) 454-2060
www.votescount.com/nov04/polls/a>
www.smartvoter.org/ca/scz/

Shasta (45)

1643 Market Street
Redding, CA 96001
(530) 225-5730
www.elections.co.shasta.ca.us

Sierra (46)

Courthouse, Room 11
P O DRAWER D
Downieville, CA 95936-0398
(530) 289-3295
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Siskiyou (47)

311 - 4th Street, Room 201
Yreka, CA 96097
(530) 842-8084
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Solano (48)

510 Clay Street
Fairfield, CA 94533
(707) 421-6675
www.solanocounty.com/elections/pplookup.asp

Sonoma (49)

435 Fiscal Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 565-6800
www.smartvoter.org/ca/sn/

Stanislaus (50)

1021 I Street, Suite 101
Modesto, CA 95354-2331
(209) 525-5200
<http://gis.stangis.org/ElectionsWeb/pollLocate.jsp>

Sutter (51)

PO Box 1555
Yuba City, CA 95992
(530) 822-7122
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Tehama (52)

444 Oak Street, Room C
Red Bluff, CA 96080
(530) 527-8190
www.co.tehama.ca.us/polls.cfm

Trinity (53)

101 Court Street
Weaverville, CA 96093
(530) 623-1220
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Tulare (54)

221 South Mooney Blvd., #G28
Visalia, CA 93291-4596
(559) 733-6275
www.tularecoauditor.org/elections/novevnyr/root1102/pollplac.htm

Tuolumne (55)

Administration Center
2 South Green Street
Sonora, CA 95370-4696
(209) 533-5570
No Polling Place Look-Up Available

Ventura (56)

800 South Victoria Avenue, L-1200
Ventura, CA 93009-1200
(805) 654-2266
www.ventura.org/election/PPPLACE/POLLPLAC.HTM

Yolo (57)

625 Court Street, Room B05
Woodland, CA 95695
(530) 666-8133
www.yoloelections.org/voting/polling_place

Yuba (58)

935 14th Street
Marysville, CA 95901-5793
(530) 749-7855
www.co.yuba.ca.us/clerk/polling_index.html

http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/elections_ppl.htm

What's Proposition 73 All About?

[Compiled by Naral Pro-Choice California, Modified 7/15/2005]

Proposition 73 would amend the state constitution to require health care providers to notify the parents of young women under the age of 18 before providing abortion services. Once a parent has been notified, a mandatory waiting period of 48 hours is required before the doctor can provide an abortion. Only those teens faced with a medical emergency or those who obtain a "judicial bypass" are exempt from the parental notification requirement.

What's at Stake for California's Teens?

Proposition 73 would serve as a blatant intrusion by the government into private, personal family matters. It places our most vulnerable teens—those in abusive homes or are pregnant as a result of rape or incest—in jeopardy of severe health consequences such as delaying medical attention or finding their own solutions on the internet or elsewhere.

Why does NARAL Pro-Choice California oppose Proposition 73?

Despite their best intentions, parental notification laws put young women in jeopardy by placing barriers between them and safe medical care. While we hope and encourage all young women to talk with their families, there are times when teens just can't talk with their parents. Some daughters don't want to disappoint their parents. Other daughters know that telling their parents would get them kicked out of the house or beaten or worse. This amendment is a one-size fits all government mandate that does not help parents keep their daughters safe.

No law can force a family to communicate and we believe that the government shouldn't be in the business of forcing itself into sensitive family decisions. Parents need real solutions like honest sex ed for their teens, support for prevention programs, and access to birth control.

Shouldn't parents have a right to know if their teen is getting an abortion?

First and foremost, parents want to ensure that their teens are safe. Although many parents do a good job of communicating with their teens about sensitive issues like sexuality, some teens can't or won't go to their parents when faced with an unplanned pregnancy. Most parents agree that whether or not their children come to them, they should be safe.

Do teens usually involve their parents in decisions about whether to have an abortion?

Yes. In fact, research shows that a majority of teens talk to their parents about their options when faced with a difficult situation like an unplanned pregnancy. Counselors and health care providers always encourage teens to talk with their parents. But we also know from experience that not every family is able to communicate when it comes to sensitive issues like abortion or sexuality.

Why and how does Proposition 73 change the state constitution?

The California Supreme Court has already ruled that parental notification laws are unconstitutional because they violate young women's right to privacy and threaten their health. Proposition 73 is an attempt by well-funded anti-choice extremists to circumvent the courts. Because it is a constitutional amendment—and only needs to win with 50% + 1 of the vote—legal challenges are not an option. It also amends the constitution to define abortion as "the use of any means to terminate the pregnancy of an unemancipated minor female known to be pregnant with knowledge that the termination with those means will, with reasonable likelihood, cause the death of the unborn child, a child conceived but not yet born."

Will Proposition 73 reduce abortion in California?

NO. Proposition 73 does nothing to reduce the number of abortions in California. Real family communication begins at home, not at the ballot box. The most effective way to prevent teen pregnancy is to begin talking to teens about responsible, appropriate sexual behavior from the time they are young and to continue the conversation as they grow.

Without government mandates and constitutional amendments, the teen pregnancy rate in California has already dropped 40% over the last ten years. Counseling, honest sex ed, access to contraception—these are the tools parents need for their kids so they don't have to face this decision.

Who is behind Proposition 73?

Proposition 73 is bankrolled by some of the most conservative, right-wing donors in California. The majority of the financial support to date has come from a few major donors, all with reputations for being far outside of the mainstream.

James Holman is a millionaire best known for his extreme anti-choice views. He is publisher of the Los Angeles Mission, the San Francisco Faith and the San Diego News Notes – a monthly publication put forth by “Concerned Citizens for Life.” His records list him as opposed to contraception and in support of outlawing abortion in all cases, including rape and incest. In 1990, Holman pled guilty to two misdemeanor charges stemming from abortion clinic protests. To date, Holman has contributed or loaned the Proposition 73 campaign close to \$1.3 million of his own money, much of it early in the campaign to gather signatures.

Don Sebastiani is a former State Assemblyman who served for six years in the State Assembly working to limit access to abortion and reproductive health services. He has been involved in the winemaking industry through the family-owned Sebastiani Vineyards & Winery and is currently the owner of Don Sebastiani & Sons which represents brands such as Smoking Loon, Pepperwood Grove, and Aquinas Napa Valley. Sebastiani has stated that parents should be notified not because of concern for their young daughters, but because “we are talking about the taking of innocent human life.” To date, Sebastiani has contributed \$150,000 to the campaign.

Other financial support has come from Tom Monaghan, the Ann Arbor, Michigan based former Domino's Pizza chain owner who has donated \$250,000 to the campaign.

Who opposes Proposition 73?

Along with Planned Parenthood, NARAL Pro-Choice California and the ACLU, many other medical and civil rights organizations have come out in opposition to parental notification laws. The American Medical Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and many others have cited the risk to teens' health in opposing these laws. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, “mandating parental notification does not achieve the intended benefit of promoting family communication, but it does increase the risk of harm to the adolescent by delaying access to appropriate care.” Concerned parents across the state also oppose Proposition 73 because they know that if their teen couldn't come to them, for whatever reason, they would want them to be safe. They also don't want judges making important life decisions for their daughters.

What's wrong with parental notification laws?

Most parents' top priority is to ensure that their teens are safe and healthy. Parental notification laws do nothing to keep teens safe or promote family communication. Ironically, the real outcome of these laws is delayed medical care and counseling for the most vulnerable teens. Parents need real tools to help them communicate openly with their children about healthy behaviors and sexual decision-making. What they don't need is government intrusion laws.

Adolescents & Parental Notification for Abortion

What can California Learn from the Experience of Other States?

About this Brief

Legislatures and voters in states across the country are considering or have passed legislation that mandates that parents are notified of and/or consent for their daughter aged 17 and under to seek abortion care. This brief provides information on such legislation, beginning with trends in pregnancy and abortion rates and the characteristics of adolescents having abortions. Next, it highlights research on parent-daughter communication about abortion decisions and on the effect of parental involvement requirements on abortion rates. Finally, it details current laws in other states that limit adolescents' access to abortion through parental involvement requirements, and draws from existing research to suggest what California can learn from other states' experiences.

Rates of pregnancies, births, and abortions among adolescents in the U.S. have declined significantly over the past decade.

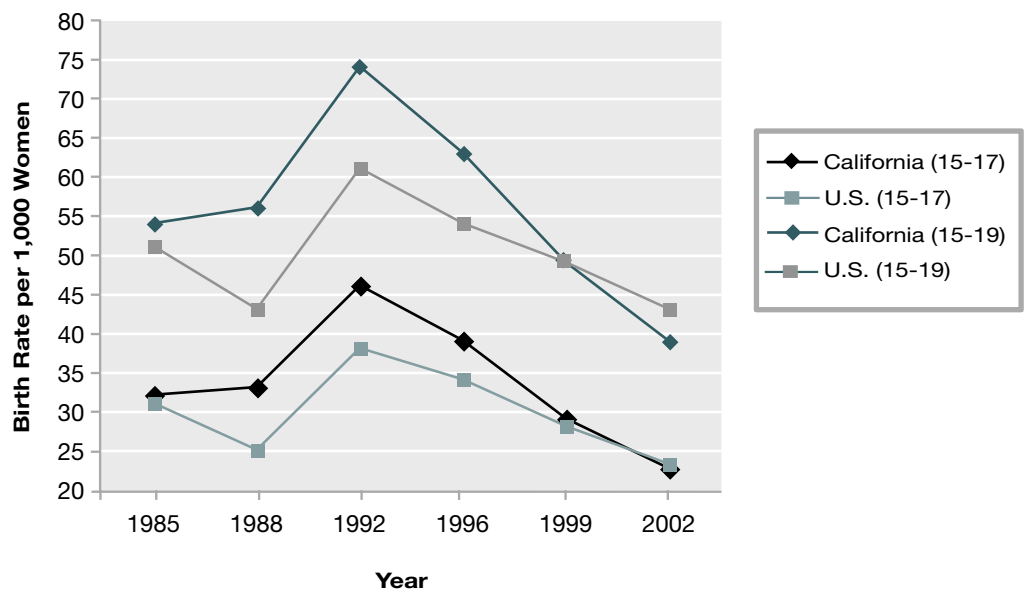
The overall U.S. teen pregnancy rate has declined over 33% since 1990: from 80.3 to 53.5 per 1000 women aged 15-17. The teen birth rate has declined as well: from 37.5 to 23.2 per 1000 women aged 15-17 over the same time period.¹

- These declines have resulted from a combination of delayed sexual activity and increased contraceptive use among adolescents.²
 - Between 1988 and 2002, the percent of adolescent women aged 15-17 who have ever had sexual intercourse declined from 37% to 30%.³
 - Between 1995 and 2002, the percent of adolescent women aged 15-17 that used contraceptives at most recent intercourse increased from 71% to 83%.³
- The abortion rate for adolescents has also declined significantly. Between 1990 and 2000, the abortion rate for teens fell by over 45%: from 26.5 to 14.5 abortions per 1000 women aged 15-17.⁴

California's adolescent pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates have declined even more steeply than those in the rest of the country.

California's teen pregnancy rate fell by 41% over the past decade: from 102 to 60 per 1000 women aged 15-17. Furthermore, the teen birth rate fell by 51%, from 46 to 22.6 per 1000 women aged 15-17, and the estimated abortion rate fell by 45% for the same age group.⁴ As a result, California's teen birth rate (for both 15-17 and 15-19 year olds) now stands below the national average (See figure below).

Adolescent Birth Rates, Ages 15-17 vs. 15-19 California & the United States²²



Continued promotion of effective teen pregnancy prevention methods will help California's growing adolescent population avoid pregnancy.

Responsible sexual behavior and contraceptive use by teens in the U.S. avert 1.65 million pregnancies annually, 200,000 of which would occur among Californian teens.⁵

Despite this tremendous progress, 1 in 5 sexually active adolescents aged 15-17 in the U.S. experiences an unintended pregnancy annually. In California, unintended pregnancies result in approximately 19,000 births, 16,000 abortions, and 7,000 miscarriages each year.^{3,4}

Nationally, over 60% of sexually active women aged 15-17 choose partners that are within two years of their age.⁶ In California, the majority of the male partners of pregnant teens aged 17 and under are teenagers themselves.⁷

Adolescents across all ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups seek abortion care, however:

- Socio-economically disadvantaged women living at or below 100% of the federal poverty level are over four times more likely than women not living below poverty to have an abortion.^{8,9}
- Older youth (aged 18-19) have abortions at 3.5 times the rate of younger women (aged 15-17).⁹
- Hispanic and African American adolescents have abortions at rates that are 2 and 3.5 times higher, respectively, than non-Hispanic white women, largely due to the fact that they experience higher pregnancy rates as well.⁹

Most young women communicate with their parents about their decision to have an abortion.

In the absence of parental notification or consent requirements, a majority (61%) of adolescents under age 18 discuss their decision to have an abortion with one or more of their parents.¹⁰

- Parental involvement is even higher among younger adolescents; over 90% of 14 year olds and 74% of 15 year olds report having at least one parent involved in their abortion decision.¹⁰
- Even when adolescents do not involve a parent, they usually involve an adult. Over 80% of young women report that a parent, stepparent, relative, or professional (such as a school counselor, nurse, or clergy member) was involved in their decision.¹⁰

A minority of young women choose not to involve parents in their abortion decision, and they have valid concerns for doing so.

Over 30% of young women who choose not to involve their parents in their abortion decision cite fear of physical harm, being kicked out of the house, or other abuse as part of their reason not to tell their parents.¹⁷

Parental communication in California is strong without mandates. The vast majority (79%) of young women aged 14-17 in California report that their parents are aware of their sexual activities.¹¹

Thirty-four states currently enforce parental consent or notification laws.¹²

There is tremendous variation in laws by state. The table at the end of this document summarizes the current status of such laws. The recent increase in parental involvement legislation has come in concert with other forms of legislation designed to limit adolescents' access to safe and confidential reproductive healthcare. Recent studies suggest that adolescents will discontinue using most reproductive health services if confidentiality is not guaranteed; however, they will not stop having sex.¹³

Parental notification and consent laws delay minors' abortions.

Induced abortion is one of the safest medical procedures for women in the U.S.; however, the risk of complications increases if an abortion is delayed into the second trimester. Adolescent women are most likely to experience such delays, and parental involvement laws increase this likelihood of delay even further.¹⁴ For example, adolescents who obtained an abortion after Mississippi's parental consent requirements took effect were 10-20% more likely to do so in the second trimester.¹⁵

Mandated parental notification does not increase parental involvement in adolescents' abortion decisions.

A comparison of adolescents visiting abortion clinics in states with (Minnesota) and without (Wisconsin) notification requirements demonstrates that adolescents involve their parents in their decision at similar rates (65.3% and 62.1%, respectively). There is no evidence that a government mandate will positively increase the frequency or quality of communication for adolescents and their families.¹⁶

Parental notification and consent laws could increase utilization of a judicial bypass option for adolescents who cannot involve their parents, rather than encourage family communication.

Young women can bypass parental involvement requirements by going before a judge. If the judge determines that parental notification is not in the best interest of the minor or that the minor is mature enough to make the decision on her own, the parental involvement requirement is waived. In 2003, 540 adolescents in Massachusetts obtained a judicial bypass in order to obtain abortion care, representing nearly 10% of all adolescents having abortions in the state that year.¹⁷

The courts may be unprepared to handle judicial bypass requests from adolescents, placing the adolescent at increased risk of a delayed and potentially riskier abortion.

A study of Alabama's juvenile court system demonstrated that only one-half of state court districts were adequately prepared to respond to inquires from young women about the judicial bypass option. Additionally, a young woman's access to information about the bypass option was largely subject to the knowledge and willingness of individuals in her local court district to disclose the information.¹⁸

The passage of parental notification and consent laws has been shown to increase the frequency with which adolescents travel out-of-state for abortion care.

Incomplete data on travel and out-of-state abortion rates make it difficult to quantify the complete impact of travel on abortion rates; nonetheless, it is estimated that:

- In the 20 months following the implementation of Massachusetts' parental consent law, half as many minors obtained an abortion as had done so prior to the law's implementation. During this same time period, more than 1800 minors (88% of the decrease in abortions) traveled to 5 neighboring states to have an abortion.¹⁹
- In Mississippi, the abortion rate among minors did not significantly decline (<3%) after the state's parental consent law was implemented. Abortions occurring both in-state and out-of-state were included in the rate.²⁰
- After Missouri implemented its parental notification law, the in-state abortion rate for women under age 18 fell by 20%. During the same time period, the likelihood that a woman in this age group traveled out of state to obtain abortion care increased by 52%.²¹

REFERENCES

- 1 Ventura SJ, Abma JC, Mosher WD, Henshaw S. Estimated pregnancy rates for the U.S., 1990-2000: *An Update: National Vital Statistics, Reports; Vol 53 no 23*. Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics, 2004.
- 2 Darroch J, Singh S. Why is Teenage Pregnancy Declining? The Roles of Abstinence, Sexual Activity, and Contraceptive Use. Occasional Report No. 1, New York, NY. The Alan Guttmacher Institute; 1999.
- 3 Abma JC, Martinez GM, Mosher WD, Dawson BS. Teenagers in the United States: Sexual activity, contraceptive use, and childbearing, 2002. *Vital Health Statistics; Vol 23 No. 24*. National Center for Health Statistics, 2004.
- 4 The Alan Guttmacher Institute. U.S. Teen Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State by State Information. New York, NY: The Alan Guttmacher Institute; 2004.
- 5 Kahn J, Brindis C, Gleit D. Pregnancies and Pregnancy Consequences Averted by the Use of Contraceptives in U.S. and California Teens. University of California, San Francisco, Paper commissioned by The California Wellness Foundation. June, 1996.
- 6 Darroch J, Landry D, Oslak S. Age Differences Between Sexual Partners in the United States. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1999; 31:160-167.
- 7 Males M. ReCAPP: Teens and Older Partners. ETR's Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention. Available at: <http://www.etr.org/recapp/research/ AuthoredPapOlderPrtnrs0504.htm#who>. Accessed July 27, 2005.
- 8 In 2000, the federal poverty level for a family of one was \$8,350. Available at: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/00poverty.htm>. Accessed June 29, 2005.
- 9 Jones R, Darroch J, Henshaw S. Patterns in the Socioeconomic Characteristics of Women Obtaining Abortions in 2000-2001. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*. 2002; 34;5:226-235.
- 10 Henshaw S, Kost K. Parental Involvement in a Minors' Abortion Decision. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1992; 25; 5:196-207.
- 11 UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. California Health Interview Survey [online]. 2001. Available at <http://www.chis.ucla.edu/>. Accessed July 19th, 2005.
- 12 The Alan Guttmacher Institute. Parental Involvement in Minors' Abortions, *State Policies in Brief*, August 1, 2005. Available at: <http://www.agi-usa.org/statecenter/abortion.html>. Accessed August 7, 2005
- 13 Reddy D, Fleming R, Swain C. Effect of mandatory parental notification on adolescent girls' use of sexual health care services. *JAMA*. 2002; 288:710-714.
- 14 Elam-Evans LD et al. Abortion surveillance, United States, 1999. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report, Surveillance Summaries* 2002;51(SS-9):1-28.
- 15 Henshaw S. The Impact of Requirements for Parental Consent on Minors' Abortions in Mississippi. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1995;27: 120-122.
- 16 Blum R, Resnick M, Stark T. The Impact of a Parental Notification Law on Adolescent Abortion Decision Making. *Am J Public Health*, 1987; 77:619-620.
- 17 Ehrlich S. Grounded in the reality of their lives: Listening to teens who make the abortion decision without involving their parents. *Berkeley Womens Law Journal*, 2003; 18: 61-180.
- 18 Silverstein H, Speitel L. "Honey, I have no idea": Court readiness to handle petitions to waive parental consent for abortion. 88 *Iowa L. Rev*, 75.
- 19 Cartoof V, Klerman L. Parental Consent for Abortion: Impact of the Massachusetts Law. *Am J Public Health* 1986; 76: 397-400.
- 20 Henshaw S. The Impact of Requirements for Parental Consent on Minors' Abortions in Mississippi. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 1995; 27: 120-122.
- 21 Ellerston C. Mandatory Parental Involvement in Minors' Abortions: Effects of Laws in Minnesota, Missouri, and Indiana. *Am J Public Health*. 1997; 87:1367-1374.
- 22 Sutton P, Mathews TJ. Trends in Characteristics of Births by State: United States, 1990, 1995, and 2000-2002. *National Vital Statistics Reports: Vol 52 no 19*. Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics, 2004.

Conclusions

Over the past decade, California has been at the forefront of successful efforts to reduce teen pregnancy and abortion rates. The state supports comprehensive family life education including key messages about both abstinence and contraception, and ensures the provision of contraceptive services for teens in a confidential manner. Adolescents in California are reporting delayed sexual activity and increases in contraceptive use. As a result, fewer adolescents experience unintended pregnancy and abortion each year. Requiring parental notification will not prevent abortion or the need for abortion, nor will it improve minors' communication with parents about abortion decisions, as evidenced by research from other states. This research also suggests that parental notification can have the negative consequence of putting adolescents' health at risk by delaying and otherwise complicating access to care.

Current state laws¹²

	Require Parental Involvement		Alternatives		Exceptions	
	Consent	Notification	Judicial Bypass	Other Adult Relatives	In Medical Emergency	In Cases of Abuse, Assault, Incest, & Neglect
Alabama	X		X		X	X
Alaska	Enjoined***					
Arizona	X		X		X	X
Arkansas		X (2 parents)	X		X	X
California	Enjoined					
Colorado		X	X		X	
Delaware		X	X	X	X	
Florida		X	X		X	
Georgia		X	X		X	
Idaho	Enjoined					
Illinois		Enjoined				
Indiana	X		X		X	
Iowa		X	X	X	X	X
Kansas		X	X		X	X
Kentucky	X		X		X	
Louisiana	X		X			
Maryland		X	X			
Massachusetts	X		X			
Michigan	X		X		X	
Minnesota		X (2 parents)	X		X	X
Mississippi	X (2 parents)		X		X	
Missouri	X		X			
Montana		Enjoined				
Nebraska		X	X		X	X
Nevada		Enjoined				
New Hampshire		Enjoined				
New Jersey		Enjoined				
New Mexico	Enjoined					
North Carolina	X		X	X	X	
North Dakota	X (2 parents)		X		X	
Ohio	Enjoined	X	X		X	X
Oklahoma		X	X		X	
Pennsylvania	X		X		X	
Rhode Island	X		X			
South Carolina	X		X	X	X	X
South Dakota		X	X		X	
Tennessee	X		X		X	X
Texas	X (after 09/05)	X (until 09/05)	X		X	X
Utah		X			X	
Virginia	X		X	X	X	X
West Virginia		X	X		X	
Wisconsin	X		X	X	X	X
Wyoming	X		X		X	
Total (as of 09/05)	19	15	33	6	30	13

*** Ten states have passed laws that later were enjoined and are therefore not enforced. In most instances, state courts determined that the law violated the state's constitution.

Ralph L & Brindis CD. Adolescents and Parental Notification for Abortion. What Can California Learn from the Experience of other States? The Bixby Center for Reproductive Health Research & Policy. University of California, San Francisco, San Francisco, CA. 2005. Available at: <http://crhp.ucsf.edu/>.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO



Involving Parents In Reproductive Health Decisions



Background

California leads the nation in reducing teen births having experienced a remarkable 40% decrease in the rates of births to teens over the past 10 years. Despite this progress, the actual number of unintended pregnancies to teens remains too high and continues to be an area of concern. To continue to address this, the State has invested time and money into developing successful and coordinated teen pregnancy prevention programs that include projects addressing family communication, recognizing that parent-child communication is an important component of successful teen pregnancy prevention programs. And research supports this. Teens cite parents as the biggest influence when it comes to decisions about sex.¹ And research shows that teens that feel connected to their parents are more likely to delay first sexual intercourse, have sex at an older age, have fewer sexual partners, and use contraception more consistently.²

Good family communication decreases the likelihood that a young woman will experience an unintended pregnancy, and increases the likelihood that she will involve one or both of her parents in her pregnancy decisions. Both objective data and subjective reports show that young women in families who communicate have a better chance of avoiding the difficulties that may accompany an unintended pregnancy. Additionally, good communication prior to a pregnancy makes it more likely that that a teen will involve her parent(s) in her decision about her pregnancy. Parental involvement in pregnancy decision is desirable, and most young women do involve at least one parent. However, in situations where girls do not involve their parents, there is generally a valid reason, such as fear of disappointing their parents, fear that the pregnancy would cause problems between parents, or fear of getting kicked out of their home.³

Despite this, laws exist that attempt to mandate family communication. Laws that require parental consent or notification for abortion are in place in 35 states throughout the U.S.⁴ In 2005, voters in California will determine whether they wish to amend the State Constitution to require parental notification for a minor's abortion. This brief provides information about parental involvement in abortion decisions and makes recommendations for policies that support the continued decline in California's teen birth rate rather than mandating family communication.

The California Adolescent Health Collaborative (AHC) is a public-private statewide coalition with the goal of increasing understanding and support for adolescent health and wellness in California. As a coalition of representatives from public and private agencies, we are committed to a comprehensive, assets-based, multidisciplinary approach to improving the health and well-being of California youth.

Acknowledgements:

Claire Brindis, DrPH, Director
of the Center for Reproductive
Health Policy Research

Janet Shalwitz, MD, Director,
Adolescent Health Working Group

A special thank you to
Emily Galpern for primary
development of this brief
and to Lauren Ralph for
background research.

Key Points

Notification does not increase parental involvement and can increase risk.

While parental involvement is desirable, legally mandated involvement in the form of parental consent or notification may not be a benefit to all minors. In states without parental notification laws, 61% of young women involved their parents and for those 14 and under, that number rose to 90%.⁵ Young women who choose not to involve their parents often have very real concerns for their safety. One study found that one third of young women who do not notify their parents about an abortion have experienced family violence and fear it will recur.⁶

Further, parental consent laws do not significantly lower the abortion rate among minors, as declines seem to be offset by an increase in travel to other states.⁷ Finally, health risks rise since the parental involvement laws seem to delay minors from obtaining an abortion in a timely manner.⁸

Parents need support in communicating with their children about sexuality and reproductive health.

In spite of the important role they play in the decisions of their children, the majority of parents (54%) indicate that they never talk to their children about sex, 28% said rarely and 5% said once a year.⁹ And 90% of parents agree with the statement “Parents believe they should talk to their kids about sex but often don’t know what to say, how to say it, or when to start”.¹⁰

The most prominent medical associations oppose parental notification laws.

The American Medical Association, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, and the American Public Health Association oppose mandatory parental-involvement laws because they endanger adolescent health and place undue burden on physicians and the court system.

For more information on adolescent health and wellness visit our web site.

www.californiateenhealth.org

Policy Recommendations

Support programs that provide training in family communication.

Parent-child communication has been recognized as an important part of sexuality education.¹¹ While a number of programs exist nationally, and in California, that promote family communication inadequate resources have been allocated to meet this need. Federal and state funding that is dedicated to teen pregnancy prevention and adolescent health services must set aside additional funds for agencies and providers to implement effective family communication programs.

Support programs designed to reduce unintended teenage pregnancies:

Provide effective sexuality education in schools in accordance with the California Education Code.

Comprehensive, medically accurate sexuality education that includes messages about both abstinence and contraception has been shown to be effective in helping young people delay intercourse and use contraception more effectively if they do become sexually active. Although most California schools do provide some sexuality education, it is not currently required and does not always comply with the Education Code.¹² HIV/AIDS education is a State mandate but does not include the same requirements as for comprehensive sexuality education.¹³

California Education Code stipulates that when sex education is taught, it be medically accurate, include information on the effectiveness and safety of contraceptive methods, foster skills to make responsible decisions about sexuality, and encourage communication within families.¹⁴ In order to continue to decrease the incidence of unintended pregnancies and encourage greater parental involvement, all middle and secondary schools should provide sexuality education, in accordance with the California Education Code.

Ensure access to confidential adolescent health services.

In addition to comprehensive sex education, teens need health care that is easy to access, confidential, non-judgmental and affordable. Publicly funded family planning and adolescent health services provide such care, and help teenagers avoid unintended pregnancy. Without the availability of these services, the national teen birthrate would be 25% higher, and, the number of abortions would be an estimated 40% higher than they currently are.¹⁵ Assurance of confidentiality in contraceptive care is especially important. One in five girls indicated that they would no longer access family planning services if they were required to notify their parent regarding their need for birth control, but these same teens indicated that they would not discontinue their sexual activity.¹⁶

To continue to lessen the need for abortions, funding should be increased to support additional services through a system of community clinics and school-based health centers that provide confidential reproductive health services for teens.

Conclusion

Parental notification laws do not increase family communication as would be desirable. Instead they appear to cause delays in receiving services and cause an undue burden on all those involved.

In order to continue California's success in reducing its incidence of teenage pregnancies and births, policies should support programs that have already been found to be effective, including providing access to confidential care, appropriate sexuality education, and parent education.

References

- ¹Albert, B. (2004) *With One Voice: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy*. Washington, DC: National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- ² Resnick, M.D., Bearman, P.S., & Blum, R.W. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *JAMA*, 278(10): 823.
- ³ Henshaw S, Kost K. (1992) Parental Involvement in Minors' Abortion Decisions. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 24, (5).
- ⁴ State Policies In Brief: Parental Involvement in Minors' Abortions. Alan Guttmacher Institute. Available at: <http://www.agi-usa.org/statecenter/abortion.html>.
- ⁵ Op Cit. Henshaw.
- ⁶ American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP], Committee on Adolescence. (1996) The Adolescent's Right To Confidential Care When Considering Abortion. *Pediatrics*, 97(5): 746-752.
- ⁷Henshaw S. (1995) The Impact of Requirements for Parental Consent on Minors' Abortions in Mississippi. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 27: 120-122; Ellertston C. (1997) Mandatory Parental Involvement in Minors' Abortions: Effects of the Laws in Minnesota, Missouri, and Indiana *American Journal of Public Health*, 87(8).
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Berne, L. & Huberman, B. (1999) *European Approaches to Adolescent Sexual Behavior and Responsibility*. Monograph. Advocates for Youth: Washington, D.C.
- ¹⁰ Op Cit. Albert.
- ¹¹ California State Education Code 51933.
- ¹² Burlingame P. (2003) *Sex Education in California Public Schools: Are Students Learning What They Need to Know?* San Francisco, CA: ACLU of Northern California.
- ¹³ California State Education Code 51933 through 51934.
- ¹⁴ Op Cit. Education Code.
- ¹⁵ Forrest, J.D. & Samara, R. (1996) Impact of Publicly Funded Contraceptive Services on Unintended Pregnancies and Implications for Medicaid Expenditures. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 28(5):188-195.
- ¹⁶ Jones R, et al. (2005). Adolescents' Reports of Parental Knowledge of Adolescents' Use of Sexual Health Services and Their Reactions to Mandated Parental Notification for Prescription Contraception *JAMA*; 293: 340 - 348.

Shelly Masur, MPH

Director

1600 Adams Street, Suite 220

Menlo Park, California 94025

TEL 650 688 5882

FAX 650 688 5701

info@californiateenhealth.org