

CQMC Coalition for Quality Maternity Care

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November 22, 2011

The Honorable Judy Chu
United States House of Representatives
1520 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Polis
United States House of Representatives
501 Cannon H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Chu and Polis:

On behalf of the Coalition for Quality Maternity Care (CQMC), a coalition of national professional, consumer, and human rights organizations that promote high quality maternity care for all women and newborns, we write to thank you for introducing the Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act (H.R. 2617).

The United States has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the developed world, with nearly 3 of 10 girls getting pregnant at least once before age 20. Furthermore, only half of teen mothers acquire their high school diplomas by age 22, compared to 89 percent of their childless peers.

Pregnant and parenting teenagers face enormous barriers to enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school, including: difficulty managing schoolwork and parenting responsibilities, and a lack of access to affordable and high-quality child care, healthcare, transportation, and other social services. Studies indicate that teens that become pregnant are also at risk of several negative consequences, including reduced educational achievement, lowered earning potential and greater health risks.

H.R. 2617 will provide an essential framework and resources to states and school districts to ensure that pregnant and parenting students have equal access to educational activities. The act will also allow school districts to refer students to pregnancy prevention, primary health care, family planning, mental health, substance abuse, housing assistance, legal aid, or other needed services. As such, the PPSAE strikes an important balance between supporting teen mothers while also addressing the societal and institutional problems associated with teen pregnancy.

As a coalition, we promote positive maternal health outcomes and realize the unique issues that pregnant and parenting teens face. CQMC applauds your long-time leadership in the area of women's health and stands ready to help you to achieve the passage of the Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act. If you wish to draw upon our assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Cooney at (202) 347-0034.

Sincerely,

Black Women's Health Imperative
American Association of Birth Centers
American College of Nurse-Midwives
Amnesty International USA
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Childbirth Connection
International Center for Traditional Childbearing
Midwives Alliance
National Association of Certified Professional Midwives

