



## **Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act (H.R. 5894)**

### **Background**

- For the first time in over a decade, teen pregnancy rates in the U.S. have increased. Every year, there are approximately 750,000 teen pregnancies and 400,000 teen births. Nearly 3 in 10 girls in the U.S. get pregnant at least once before age 20, and the rates are even higher for girls of color.
- Pregnancy and parenting responsibilities significantly increase a student's risk of dropping out of school: only half of teen mothers have a high school diploma by age 22, compared to 89 percent of their childless peers.
- In a nationwide survey of dropout youth, close to one-half of all female dropouts and one-third of male dropouts said that becoming a parent played a role in their decisions to leave school.
- The dropout crisis experienced by this group of students has severe short- and long-term consequences for the economic success and well-being of their families and communities, as well as our nation. For example, the children of dropouts are more likely to drop out of school themselves.
- This alarming trend stems from the many barriers that pregnant and parenting teens face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school, such as discrimination, the challenge of juggling schoolwork with parenting responsibilities, and lack of access to affordable, quality child care, transportation, and other critical services. Schools can and should take steps to engage and re-engage pregnant and parenting students by implementing voluntary programs that provide or arrange educational and related services for them.
- Providing supports for pregnant and parenting students can go a long way toward improving high school graduation rates, especially because pregnant and parenting students often are highly motivated. For example, in the same nationwide survey of dropout youth, those who left school to care for a family member or because they became a parent were more likely than any other group of dropouts to say they would have worked harder if their schools had demanded more of them and provided the necessary supports.

### **What the Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act does:**

The Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act provides the necessary framework and resources to states and school districts to ensure that pregnant and parenting students have equal access to educational opportunity. Specifically, the legislation:

- Enables states to create a plan for the education of pregnant and parenting students, provide professional development and technical assistance to school districts, coordinate services with other state agencies, and disseminate information, among other activities.
- Establishes a state coordinator and school district liaisons for the education of pregnant and parenting students.
- Requires school district grantees to provide academic support services for pregnant and parenting students; assist students in gaining access to affordable child care, early childhood education, and transportation services; engage in student outreach, recruitment and retention; provide professional development for school personnel; and revise school policies and practices to remove barriers and encourage pregnant and parenting students to continue their education.



- Allows districts to provide parenting and life skills classes; case management services; referrals to pregnancy prevention, primary health care, family planning, mental health, substance abuse, housing assistance, legal aid, mentoring, or other services needed by the student; and to address school climate issues, including illegal discrimination against and stigmatization of pregnant and parenting students.
- Collects and reports data on pregnant and parenting students annually, including educational outcomes, and requires a rigorous evaluation of the program.

### **Supporting Organizations (List in Formation)**

American Association of University Women  
California Women's Law Center  
Colorado Youth Matter  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Healthy Teen Network  
Minnesota Organization on Adolescent  
Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting

National Campaign to Prevent Teen and  
Unplanned Pregnancy  
National Council of La Raza  
National Crittenton Foundation  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Network for Youth  
National Women's Law Center

### **Congressional Co-sponsors (List in Formation)**

Shelley Berkley (NV-1)  
Lois Capps (CA-23)  
Yvette Clarke (NY-11)  
John Conyers (MI-14)  
Raúl Grijalva (AZ-7)  
Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15)  
Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30)  
Doris Matsui (CA-05)

Gwen Moore (WI-04)  
Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC)  
Laura Richardson (CA-37)  
Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34)  
Loretta Sanchez (CA-47)  
Janice Schakowsky (IL-09)  
Robert "Bobby" Scott (VA-03)  
Lynn Woolsey (CA-06)

### **Supporting Materials**

- [H.R. 5894 Sign-On Letter](#)
- [Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act \(H.R. 5894\)](#)
- [National Women's Law Center News Release on H.R. 5894](#)
- [Representative Jared Polis \(D-CO\) News Release on H.R. 5894](#)
- [National Women's Law Center materials: Access to Education for Pregnant and Parenting Students](#)
- National Women's Law Center and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund: [Listening to Latinas: Barriers to High School Graduation](#)
- [Healthy Teen Network: A Policy Platform to Promote Health and Success Among Young Families](#)

### **Further Information**

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