

Statements of Support for the Ryan-DeLauro “Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act”

- American Association of Community Colleges
- American Association of University Women
- American Civil Liberties Union
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- Anti-Defamation League
- Brian D. McLaren, *Author/Activist*
- Catholics for Choice
- Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
- Charles C. Camosy, *Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics, Fordham University; Coordinator, Curran Center for American Catholic Studies Conversation Project*
- Dr. David P. Gushee, *Distinguished University, Professor of Christian Ethics, Mercer University*
- Dr. Frank S. Page, *Pastor, Taylors First Baptist Church, Taylors, SC; Immediate Past President, Southern Baptist Convention*
- Dr. Joel C. Hunter, *Senior Pastor, Northland - A Church Distributed*
- Dr. Paul de Vries, *President, New York Divinity School*
- Dr. William Shaw, *President, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; Pastor, White Rock Baptist Church*
- Faith in Public Life
- Family Violence Prevention Fund
- Frances Kissling, *Visiting Scholar, Center for Bio-ethics at the University of Pennsylvania; Former President, Catholics for Choice; Member of the Board of Directors, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice*
- Glen Stassen, *Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics, Fuller Theological Seminary*
- Guttmacher Institute
- Health Services Association of California Community Colleges
- Jewish Council for Public Affairs
- Joe Battaglia, *Founder and President, Renaissance Communications*
- Jonathan Merritt, *Faith and Culture Writer, and National Spokesperson, Southern Baptist Environment and Climate Initiative*
- Kate Michelman, *Former President, NARAL Pro-Choice America*
- Lisa Sharon Harper, *Author, Evangelical Does Not Equal Republican...or Democrat; Cofounder and Executive Director, New York Faith & Justice*

- Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Professor of Theology at Boston College; Past President, Catholic Theological Society of America*
- Marilyn Cohen, *Executive Director of the Sioux City Jewish Federation; Former Director of the Emma Goldman Clinic for Women; Co-Author of "A Search for Common Ground on Clinic Activism"*
- Melissa Rogers, *Visiting Professor of Religion and Public Policy, Wake Forest University Divinity School; Former Director, The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*
- NARAL Pro-Choice America
- NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio
- National Abortion Federation
- National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
- National Coalition of American Nuns
- National Council of Jewish Women
- National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
- National Partnership for Women & Families
- National Women's Law Center
- NETWORK- A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
- Nicholas P. Cafardi, *Civil and Canon Lawyer; Professor and Former Dean, Duquesne University School of Law*
- Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health
- Planned Parenthood Federation of America
- Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
- Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
- Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing
- Rev. Adam Hamilton, *The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection*
- Rev. Derrick Harkins, *Senior Pastor, Nineteenth Street Baptist Church*
- Rev. Gabriel A. Salguero, *Executive and Public Policy Advisor, The Latino Leadership Circle*
- Rev. Joseph A. Darby, *Senior Pastor, Morris Brown African Methodist Episcopal Church*
- Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, *President, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference*
- Richard Cizik, *President, The New Evangelicals*
- Ronald J. Sider, *President, Evangelicals for Social Action*
- SIECUS - Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States
- Sojourners
- The Abortion Care Network
- The Episcopal Church

- The General Board of Church & Society of The United Methodist Church
- The Rebecca Project for Human Rights
- Third Way
- Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
- United Church of Christ
- Vivian Berryhill, *Founder and President, National Coalition of Pastors' Spouses*
- Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual

American Association of Community Colleges

George R. Boggs, CEO and President:

I write as President of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). AACC represents the nation's almost 1,200 community colleges and has 29 formally affiliated councils, including the American Student Association for Community Colleges (ASACC).

Earlier this year, President Obama challenged community colleges to produce five million more graduates by 2020. This challenge echoed similar calls from the last several years. In response to these calls, across the country community colleges are focused on developing new strategies to ensure that all those students who wish to graduate are enabled to do so. A broad array of variables impact persistence and graduation, but many of them fall outside the lens of policymakers and researchers, who tend to focus on financing and academic preparation. However, the very nature of the community college, whose students so frequently have work and family responsibilities that transcend the preoccupations of traditional students, demands a broader approach.

Therefore, AACC is pleased to lend its strong support for the community college provisions in H.R. 3312, the "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act." AACC is particularly focused on Section 602 of the legislation, which authorizes demonstration grants to community colleges to support activities to prevent unplanned pregnancies. Without question, unplanned pregnancies have a tremendous negative impact on the ability of community college students to finish their studies. 61% of community college students who have children after enrolling don't finish their education, which is 65% higher than the rate for those who didn't have children. In America's higher education system, students who have unplanned pregnancies are concentrated in community colleges.

Under H.R. 3312, community colleges will be eligible for demonstration grants to develop and implement innovative approaches to prevent unplanned pregnancy and promote healthy relationships among community college students. We particularly applaud the legislation's flexibility, which should encourage needed experimentation with pregnancy prevention programs. At the same time, colleges will be expected to develop strategies that involve large numbers of students and are sustainable. The legislation is authorized at \$15 million for each of fiscal years 2010-12.

We appreciate your leadership in introducing this important legislation and are pledged to working with you to secure its enactment.

American Civil Liberties Union

Vania Leveille, Legislative Counsel:

An important bill aiming to improve access to reproductive health care and meet the needs of women and families was introduced in the House of Representatives today. The "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act," sponsored by Representatives Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), would fund a wide range of programs that improve women's reproductive health, prevent unintended pregnancies and increase support for parenting.

The ACLU welcomes this bill, which will increase access to contraception, help meet the needs of many pregnant and parenting women and improve the lives of women and families throughout the country. The bill also includes provisions to expand Medicaid coverage for family planning, support pregnant and parenting college students, expand adoption assistance, encourage conversations about sexuality between parents and teens and improve sexuality education and other programs to ensure that teenagers make healthy and responsible decisions.

A woman facing an unintended pregnancy needs the opportunity to make the best decision for her circumstances, whether her decision is raising the child, adoption, or abortion. We urge Congress to not only pass this legislation, but also to ensure that a woman who needs to end a pregnancy has access to the care she needs. This bill is a strong beginning, not the last word, on meeting the health care needs of all women.

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Gerald F. Joseph, Jr, MD, President:

On behalf of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), representing 53,000 physicians and partners in women's health, thank you for introducing the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act. This legislation would achieve an array of common-sense policies and address several important issues related to sexual and reproductive health.

Each year, approximately half of all pregnancies are unintended and about half of those end in abortions. Approximately 750,000 teenagers become pregnant every year and, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 88% of births to females aged 15 – 17 are the result of unintended pregnancies. A 2009 CDC study indicates that teen pregnancy has increased for the first time in 15 years, further evidence of the need to improve education and access to family planning services.

Your bill includes many of ACOG's women's health priorities, including: grants for teen pregnancy prevention comprehensive education, expanded coverage of family planning under Medicaid and Title X, expanded postpartum coverage for mothers, guaranteed maternity coverage and a prohibition on pregnancy as a pre-existing condition in the individual insurance market, grants to community health centers for the purchase of ultrasound equipment, and the establishment of programs to identify and treat victims or women at risk of domestic violence and sexual assault.

ACOG applauds your leadership in recognizing the importance of prevention and support in women's health and we look forward to working with you.

Brian D. McLaren, Author/Activist:

Short-term polarization on certain issues may be inevitable, but long-term paralysis is not. I'm thankful to (and for) Rep. Tim Ryan and Rep. Rosa DeLauro for seeking the higher ground of common ground on the abortion question. They are demonstrating that people can disagree on the moral and legal status of abortion and yet agree on something deeper and higher - the wisdom of seeking to reduce the number of abortions. Where partisanship may produce paralysis, wise leadership finds a way forward, seeking good-faith progress. I hope the Ryan-DeLauro bill's passage in the coming days will build a new momentum for this kind of creative third way in public life.

Catholics for Choice

Jon O'Brien, President:

Catholics for Choice is delighted to give our backing to the Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act of 2009, sponsored by Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Tim Ryan (D-OH). We applaud them for advancing this well-balanced bill that will help to reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies and support women and men who want to have children.

Catholics for Choice acknowledges the longstanding and unwavering work that these Catholic representatives have done to affirm the moral capacity of women and men to make decisions about their reproductive healthcare. We and Catholics across the country are heartened by their efforts and know that their Catholic social justice beliefs helped to guide their work on this legislation.

The introduction of the Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act comes at a critically important time. Each year, nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended, and nearly half of unintended pregnancies end in abortion. In 2006, 36,200,000 women, more than half of all women of reproductive age, were in need of contraceptive services and supplies to help prevent unintended pregnancy, and nearly half of those needed public support for such care.

Catholics support policies that enable women to make decisions about whether to become pregnant, or whether to continue a pregnancy. Catholic support for family planning and abortion is grounded in the core principles of Catholicism, which respect the moral and legal right of individuals to follow their consciences on all matters, including those related to sexuality and reproductive health.

Rather than seeking to present reproductive health services as a distraction from the real issues of the day, the legislation includes a range of key provisions that point to the integral role these services play in the delivery of comprehensive healthcare.

Catholics for Choice applauds Representatives DeLauro and Ryan for elevating the importance of family planning by authorizing increased funding for the federal Title X program. We are very pleased that the legislation would restore family planning to mandatory status for Medicaid benchmark plans, thus preventing states from avoiding federal requirements for these services. The bill also amends Medicaid law to give states the option of extending coverage for family planning services and supplies to women who would be entitled to Medicaid-funded prenatal, labor, delivery and postpartum care.

Additionally, we applaud the provisions in the legislation that would fund pregnancy prevention efforts, with preference to programs that provide age-appropriate, evidenced-based information, including information on contraceptives and sexually transmitted infections.

We are also pleased that the bill provides resources for new parents, which will help them navigate the challenges of raising children; in particular, provisions that would expand coverage of postpartum care from 60 days to one year under the State Children's Health Insurance Program and expand the participation of new parents in the Women, Infants, and Children program. The bill also includes

language that makes key changes in the private healthcare market that would remove pregnancy as a pre-existing condition and require coverage of maternity care.

Finally, we are heartened that the bill would authorize several new programs that provide other key resources to expectant and new parents, including home visits that would provide information on maternal and child healthcare and contraception; a new domestic violence screening and treatment program for pregnant women and new mothers; and increased funding for the Child Care and Development Fund. We look forward to working with Reps. Ryan and DeLauro as the legislation moves forward in the 111th Congress.

Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good:

Preventing the tragedy of abortion requires elected officials to find common ground and support comprehensive efforts to help women and families choose life. Legislative efforts such as the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion Act and the Pregnant Women Support Act offer hope that after decades of political paralysis and bitter divisions we now have the chance to seize a historic moment to offer women and families real solutions.

By expanding adoption tax credit assistance and nutritional support for low-income parents, improving access to prenatal ultrasounds, encouraging teenagers to delay sexual activity and removing pregnancy as a preexisting condition under health care coverage, Rep. Tim Ryan and Rep. Rosa DeLauro are taking essential steps toward finding common ground in service of the common good. While achieving consensus on every aspect of a bill is unrealistic, we are encouraged that pro-choice and pro-life representatives are reaching across divides to make progress on a critical issue. Applying moral principles in a pluralistic democracy enriched by diverse values does not mean compromising core convictions. It does require prudential judgment and recognition that politics is the "art of the possible." Growing efforts to support pregnant women and reduce abortions are a cause for hope that pro-life and pro-choice Americans should embrace.

Charles C. Camosy, Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics, Fordham University; Coordinator, Curran Center for American Catholic Studies Conversation Project:

The business of building common ground often involves compromise and becoming comfortable with imperfection. Though I'm politely skeptical of this bill's contraceptive provisions ever contributing to abortion reduction in the long run, the rest of the bill is a long overdue movement in the direction of giving women significantly more resources in order to make a choice other than abortion. Its passage will both empower women and save many lives of the most helpless members of our human family in the process. It is powerful evidence that we need not make the false choice between supporting and respecting women and supporting and respecting their prenatal children.

The bill is also a fantastic opportunity to challenge and even begin to reverse the polarization, animosity, and stone-throwing that has characterized the culture wars in the United States. Roman Catholics especially should bounce at the chance to support an initiative which upholds the moral status of prenatal human beings along with just distribution of resources for their mothers. The artificial and destructive divide between 'moral status conservatives' and 'social justice liberals' is something that, as our Pope made clear in his latest encyclical, is foreign to the Roman Catholic tradition. We should take the lead in challenging a way of thinking radically limited by late 20th-

Century American political categories; and this bill is a good place to start what will undoubtedly be a much longer journey toward this goal.

Dr. David P. Gushee, Distinguished University, Professor of Christian Ethics, Mercer University:

On the issue of abortion, ever since *Roe v. Wade* the United States government has primarily been known for one thing--protecting legal access to abortion. We all know how culturally polarizing this decision and its aftermath have been. The Ryan-DeLauro bill would not challenge that legal access. This is regrettable from my own pro-life perspective. But the bill would commit the federal government to creative efforts to reducing the need for abortion, preventing unintended pregnancies, and supporting women and families who need real help if they want to carry a pregnancy to term. This kind of legislation sends a new kind of message--that the government wants to help preserve the conditions of genuine choice, such as, for example, meeting the economic and health care needs of women who face unintended pregnancies, so that they don't have to end a pregnancy simply because they are backed into a corner financially.

Pro-life Americans should support this legislation because of the very many creative and concrete ways it addresses the real-life circumstances that families face in relation to preventing and dealing with unintended pregnancies. These are data-driven policies that show real promise in tackling the abortion problem at its roots. In a time of economic crisis in our nation, more and more women and families are already being driven to abortion. This is terrible but true. Passage of this legislation would not guarantee an immediate drop in the annual number of abortions, but it does offer considerable promise of contributing to such a drop over the long haul, by meeting desperate human needs right now and in days to come.

I strongly support this creative legislation, and pray that its passage will help meet the needs of millions of Americans and prevent countless abortions in the years to come.

Dr. Frank S. Page, Pastor, Taylors First Baptist Church, Taylors, SC ; Immediate Past President, Southern Baptist Convention:

This morning, July 22, 2009, in an interview with AP News, New York, Dr. Frank Page expressed his tentative support for the Ryan-DeLauro bill. He stated that he is always delighted at any effort to reduce the number of abortions and/or unintended pregnancies in our nation. He is thankful that this effort is being put forth.

However, his concern about the bill has to do with the amount of overall input from the Federal Government in the lives of poor families and poor women and children. Having experienced poverty in his own life at an early age, he is somewhat aware of the effect of government intrusion upon a family's mentality. He also deeply wishes that the entities stepping forward to minister to the poor were first and foremost churches and faith groups and second, families. While he is excited that the bill does provide support, he wishes the support would come from these other places first and foremost.

He has also been assured that the increased access to contraception is not in any way abrogating the state's rights to require parental involvement and approval. He is also pleased that the bill increases parental involvement in prevention of unintended pregnancy, includes a strong emphasis upon adoption, and supports programs that emphasize abstinence.

Therefore, Dr. Page is tentatively saying that he supports this legislation.

Dr. Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor, Northland – A Church Distributed:

I believe we are at a critical crossroads in our nation's history. Groups that have been antagonistic toward each other are working together to make progress on the very issues that have driven a wedge between us. We are cooperating in ways that do not compromise either group's basic moral convictions. For this reason I am an enthusiastic and committed supporter of the "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act." This bill finds common ground that embraces our shared core value of reducing abortion through addressing its root causes. I believe we need an all-encompassing approach: comprehensive sex education with an abstinence emphasis, better access to contraception for low-income women, and better enlistment of parents in preventing teen pregnancy. We also need to increase awareness about adoption and ensure that pregnant women and new families have the support they need to finish school, put food on the table and feel confident that their new family can thrive. I applaud pro-life Representative Tim Ryan and pro-choice Representative Rosa DeLauro for recognizing that there is much we can agree upon, even on such difficult issues. I am honored to stand with them and Third Way behind this new direction employing respectful words and concrete policies that move our country beyond polarization to progress, to a place we can all agree is healthier.

Dr. Paul de Vries, President, New York Divinity School:

The Ryan-DeLauro Bill is especially well-crafted to reduce the number of abortions in America by preventing unintended pregnancies, reducing the demand for abortions, and even supporting parents who want to go forward with their pregnancies, and those dear people who choose to adopt children. Especially attractive are (1) the improved access to prenatal ultrasounds (2) expanded tax credits for adoption, and a national public education campaign about the positive benefits of adoption for children and families, (3) incentives to involve parents in helping their teens avoid pregnancy and (4) comprehensive sex education with an abstinence emphasis along with improved access to contraception for low-income women. What is not to like? Let us work and pray for this bill and its giant steps forward in protecting precious human life.

Dr. William Shaw, President, National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; Pastor, White Rock Baptist Church:

The introduction of The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Families Act is especially encouraging. For too long, the needs of women and families have gone unaddressed amid the loudness of the abortion debate, but the common ground approach embodied in this bill focuses our energy where it should be - on addressing the concrete problems that lead to abortion.

Faith in Public Life:

We have worked for years to build common ground on abortion among ideologically diverse religious leaders. Along the way, we've discovered an inspiring truth – that leaders of courage and good faith who disagree fundamentally on the legality of abortion still share many common values: compassion, a deep concern for women in difficult circumstances, a commitment to protecting families. "The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act" is a landmark achievement for leaders who disagree about the legality of abortion but share the desire to reduce the need for abortion by preventing unintended pregnancy, supporting women and families, and expanding adoption. These measures will improve the lives of women, parents, children and families, and they require no one to compromise their core values on abortion. Should this bill pass, fewer women will seek abortions, more families will lead healthy and prosperous lives, and more children will find loving homes. This effort is a quintessential example of common ground serving the common good. The diverse religious leaders who have stepped up and embraced these goals demonstrate the positive, productive and unifying force religion can play in the public square.

Family Violence Prevention Fund

Esta Soler, President and Founder:

On behalf of the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPF), I am pleased to support the Preventing Unintended Pregnancy, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act introduced by Representatives DeLauro and Ryan. I appreciate the dedication shown by these leaders to craft a bill that reflects a clear understanding of the impact of violence on women's reproductive health outcomes, including unintended pregnancies.

The intersection of sexual violence and reproductive health has been largely unexplored. It is time for that to change and this legislation is an important advance in raising the public's awareness of that connection. Too many women, while dating or in relationships, experience rape, sexual coercion or have partners who prevent them from using protection. Violence against women is associated with a host of negative reproductive health outcomes: more sexually transmitted infections (STIs), higher rates of unintended pregnancy, limited utilization of prenatal care, and poor birth outcomes. According to a study by Harvard University, one in three teenage girls abused by a boyfriend becomes pregnant. Research indicates two in five adult women who have been abused by partners have experienced an unwanted pregnancy. The legislation also reflects the fact that the incidents of abuse actually increase during a pregnancy, and a woman's ob-gyn is often the only person she'll confide in. These health outcomes must change.

We can help by training health care providers to assess patients for abuse, and making sure that women are able to access the health services they need.

Again, I thank Representatives DeLauro and Ryan for their leadership and urge Congress to pass the Preventing Unintended Pregnancy, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act.

Frances Kissling, Visiting Scholar, Center for Bio-ethics at the University of Pennsylvania; Former President, Catholics for Choice; Member of the Board of Directors, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice:

Among the most important decisions women make are those related to pregnancy and parenthood. As a Catholic and a feminist, I support policies that make it possible for women to make those

decisions responsibly, in the context of their personal values, and consistent with their life goals. Women have strongly registered their desire to prevent unintended pregnancy when they are not ready to parent and their equally strong hope that society will participate in their decisions to have children by providing the support that all women, but especially low income women, need in order to raise healthy children in healthy families. The absence of consistent and adequate public funding for comprehensive sexuality education, contraceptive services and childbearing and rearing has served as a barrier to women's ability to exercise their right to make these decisions. Economic barriers have resulted in women choosing abortions they would have preferred not to have faced and bearing children they either raise at great sacrifice or place reluctantly for adoption. Women have also been denied access to safe and legal abortion because of funding barriers.

We are a long way from comprehensive, compassionate and sound public policy that respects women's reproductive challenges and choices. Passing the "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act" is a critical and important step in addressing those problems. I offer my unqualified support for the bill and my admiration for the tenacity and wisdom of the bill's authors, Representatives Rosa DeLauro and Tim Ryan.

Both my feminist and Catholic values support policy efforts to prevent unintended pregnancy which will meet women's own goal of avoiding abortion where possible and society's goal of respecting the act of creation. While official Catholic teaching prohibits the use of contraception by even married couples, there is strong, almost universal support among Catholic clergy, theologians and lay people that rejects that position. Catholics recognize that we cannot make a serious dent in the need for abortion without universal access to family planning. The provisions in this bill that strengthen access to contraception are the single most important factor in reducing women's need for abortion.

At the same time, we must make it possible for women who become pregnant and want to have children to do so in dignity. No woman should need to have an abortion because she cannot afford to have or raise a child. The provisions in this bill that support women and couples throughout pregnancy and children after birth are the hall mark of an ethic that recognizes the shared responsibility between the women and society for the well being of children.

I pledge to work for the swift passage of the Ryan-DeLauro bill and will urge my fellow Catholics and reproductive health and justice colleagues to also raise their voice in support of this the bill.

Glen Stassen, *Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics, Fuller Theological Seminary:*

Our polarized nation needs healing. The Ryan-DeLauro common ground abortion bill can help move us toward healing the divided ideologies, and curtailing the high numbers of abortions. Its provisions are very like the Teenage Parent Program in which my wife worked. The TAPP program provided training by nurses like my wife in prenatal nutrition and childcare, as well as how not to get pregnant again, and contraceptives, and social workers to help them plan their future, and a childcare nursery, and an OB/GYN clinic, and community support.

Only one percent of its pregnant girls had an abortion, by contrast with the usual rate of 75 percent for teenagers below 15 years old, and 39 percent for those 15 to 19 years old. And because of the support

and training they received, almost none of them got pregnant again until after they had graduated from high school. And far more finished high school than in other high schools.

I plea for uncommon decency and mutual respect in discussing and working together to achieve the healing we need.

Health Services Association of California Community Colleges

The Health Services Association California Community Colleges (HSACCC) is pleased support H.R. 3312, the "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion, and Supporting Parents Act." This is an important bill to improve access to reproductive health services and information, including efforts to reduce unplanned pregnancies.

The California Community Colleges is the largest higher educational system in the nation, comprised of 72 districts and 110 colleges, serving more than 2.7 million students per year. The system supplies workforce training, basic skills education, prepares students for transfer to 4-year institutions and offers opportunities for personal enrichment and lifelong learning. As a professional organization composed of community college student health service program directors, HSACCC's mission is to support and foster student access to quality health services within the California Community Colleges. Student health services are an important asset on college campuses because they support the academic success of students and often serve as the primary or only place where they can seek health care.

As college health professionals, we understand that reproductive health care is a priority health issue for our students, given that the majority are sexually active, tend to delay marriage, and are often not interested in becoming pregnant until later in life. We recognize the important link between health and student achievement, and in our role as campus public health experts, we take seriously the task of ensuring students remain in school by having the ability to control their fertility and family planning options.

Much of the research examining sexual and reproductive health behavior among college students focuses on traditional 4-year campuses, with limited data on community college students. Similarly, there has been relatively little focus to date on addressing unplanned pregnancy among community college students. Therefore, we applaud Representatives Ryan and DeLauro for including language that supports targeted demonstration grants to prevent unplanned pregnancies at community colleges.

Recent data from the 2007 National College Health Assessment (NCHA) in which 13 California community colleges participated, revealed a number of alarming sexual and reproductive health behaviors and outcomes for California community college students. For instance, these community college students reported a high rate (5.4%) of unintended pregnancy, a figure more than twice (2.4%) that of the national NCHA cohort (which consists mainly of four year colleges and universities). Further, more than one in five (21.3%) sexually active students reported that they or their partners have used emergency contraception within the last school year, which is 1.5 times higher than the overall NCHA cohort (14.1%). This indicates that community college students are at high risk for unplanned pregnancy. Student health services programs are in a unique position to help divert

unplanned pregnancies and reduce the need for abortions through health promotion, clinical services, and prevention programs.

The Health Services Association of California Community Colleges (HSACCC) is pleased to support H.R. 3312 and looks forward to working with other advocates to address these pressing public health issues and providing support to our students to achieve their academic potential.

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Rabbi Steve Gutow, President:

Scripture teaches us to value both life and potential life. The 'Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act,' is a monumental piece of legislation to begin a new era in support of women and children. We applaud the Ryan-DeLauro bill for addressing the serious issue of abortion by tackling the root causes of this emotionally and physically difficult procedure. Providing teens with effective pregnancy prevention programs, ensuring that pregnant women understand their full range of options, and offering assistance to new parents in need undoubtedly will reduce abortions and help families raise healthy kids. By addressing the needs and concerns of young women, soon-to-be moms, and parents of infants, this legislation will help new parents flourish in our communities. The Ryan-DeLauro bill will help us move forward to accomplish these goals and better our society.

Joe Battaglia, Founder and President, Renaissance Communications:

While some would prefer to remain entrenched in their combative dialogue about the pros and cons about abortion, there is a real need to rise above partisanship to finally offer meaningful and practical solutions to this issue. The "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act" fulfills this need. The bill offers a number of policies that we CAN agree on, such as comprehensive sex education with an abstinence emphasis, support for pregnant and parenting students and parent support services to low-income families with young children.

Simply, to those who face difficult choices about pregnancy, we need to help them through those choices to embrace life. Actions speak louder than words, and love goes beyond words. Acts of love and kindness will reduce abortions in ways that the courts and laws never can.

Evangelicals cannot accept abortion, but they can and should support opportunities to prevent the need for abortions, and for supporting those individuals who face those decisions with practical ways to care for their child.

Jonathan Merritt, Faith and Culture Writer, and National Spokesperson, Southern Baptist Environment and Climate Initiative:

Protecting unborn life is a call that evangelicals have heeded for generations, and we take it as seriously today as those before us. But young evangelicals bring a new approach to this enduring commitment. Valuing results and eschewing combative rhetoric, we embrace a comprehensive approach that reduces abortion by preventing unintended pregnancy through means such as comprehensive sex education with an emphasis on abstinence, supporting pregnant women and families, and expanding adoption. I am very pleased to find these common ground elements in the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act.

Kate Michelman, *Former President, NARAL Pro-Choice America:*

I applaud Representatives Rosa DeLauro and Tim Ryan and join my pro-choice colleagues in expressing support for the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act. It is a cornerstone of pro-choice advocacy and activism that society should respect, support and enable the full range of choices women make about pregnancy and child bearing including making available adequate resources for comprehensive sexuality education, education about and access to contraception, pre and post natal care as well as meaningful financial assistance for raising children. This bill is a significant step in enacting what the choice movement has always believed. The careful decisions women make about reproduction deserve society's support, for it is through those decisions that society unfolds. One of them is access to safe and legal abortion, which was affirmed by the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade*. Access to affordable prenatal care, quality child care and meeting other needs are equally important.

The bill is important to me as an advocate for women's rights and health. But it has special meaning, for I personally know what it means when women and girls have inadequate sexuality education, lack access to contraception or are discouraged from using it, and have inadequate help from our government when they face an unintended pregnancy. I have faced all those challenges.

As a practicing Catholic and young married woman, I followed the position of the Church and did not use contraception. I practiced the "rhythm" method and had three beautiful daughters in three years. I was then faced with a fourth pregnancy during which I was abandoned by my husband and needed public assistance to care for the children I had. Few resources were available. That reality, in addition to other circumstances, influenced my options and the decision I made. I chose to have an abortion. I underwent an undignified and humiliating process which required me to plead mental illness in order to get the abortion.

My three girls and I faced the humiliation and struggle of making a life with only the barest support from a society whose actions did not live up to its heartfelt and noble belief in valuing children and families.

The Ryan DeLauro bill gives women more options and stigmatizes no choice – and I applaud and wholeheartedly endorse it.

Lisa Sharon Harper, *Author, Evangelical Does Not Equal Republican...or Democrat; Cofounder and Executive Director, New York Faith & Justice:*

It is my joy to support the "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act." NY Faith & Justice is a growing movement of churches, organizations, and individuals committed to "ending poverty" in New York. Impoverished women of color have the highest rates of abortion in our nation because their tumultuous circumstances make it all too difficult to "choose life". The measures called for by this legislation will address root causes of abortion by offering stabilizing forces in the turbulent lives of impoverished women and children. From that stable ground, these families can embark on the long climb from poverty to empowerment. As an Evangelical, I personally support this ground-breaking legislation because I believe that every life is

sacred; every mother's and every child's. This Act will make it possible for more low-income women to choose life and more children will live life more abundantly.

Lisa Sowle Cahill, Professor of Theology at Boston College; Past President, Catholic Theological Society of America:

The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act offers a unique opportunity for those who support women and the unborn to accomplish real change. Now is the time to move past counterproductive divisions. Everyone can agree that abortion is a tragic decision and that women facing unplanned pregnancies are often desperate for support. We can also agree that avoiding unintended pregnancy is better than abortion. Studies in Europe and the United States have shown definitively that when economic support for women and new parents rise, abortion rates fall. This is true even where abortion laws are permissive. Conversely, poverty and high abortion rates rise together, even where the law prohibits abortion. The Ryan-DeLauro bill is an outstanding opportunity to overcome ideological polarization and really tackle the root causes of a national problem.

Pope John Paul II called voters and policy makers to practice "the art of the possible" regarding abortion policy. Pope Benedict XVI has met with President Obama to find common ground on social issues. This is the time for Catholics and others to follow their example, and finally end culture wars that exacerbate rather than resolve the problem of abortion.

Marilyn Cohen, Executive Director of the Sioux City Jewish Federation; Former Director of the Emma Goldman Clinic for Women; Co-Author of "A Search for Common Ground on Clinic Activism":

As the current director of a Jewish federation in northwest Iowa and a former director of a feminist women's health clinic, which provides abortion services, I am deeply invested in the search for common ground. I support the "Reducing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion, and Supporting Parents" Act not only as a pro-choice activist and leader in my local faith community, but also as someone who has spent many hours engaged in meaningful dialogue on places of common ground on pro-choice/pro-life issues. The Ryan-DeLauro bill puts forth a comprehensive and concrete set of common ground policies and includes the two equally important components of prevention and support.

I am committed to protecting a woman's right to an abortion and I respect the equal commitment from activists who oppose abortion. This legislation highlights the many ways both sides can work together. I believe it provides the possibility for local groups to work together to find shared values and pursue shared goals together.

As activists, our commitment to our goals will not be diminished through common ground efforts. The hours I spent in dialogue with activists from both sides, seeking first to understand differing viewpoints and then exploring the possibilities of working together on shared goals, have taught me that these efforts help us distill, not dilute, our own beliefs. And in the process, we can better the lives of women and families in local communities across the country.

Melissa Rogers, Visiting Professor of Religion and Public Policy, Wake Forest University Divinity School; Former Director, The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life:

For decades, many Americans have been locked in a debate about abortion. The problem has not been the debate – it is an important one that should continue. The problem has been that, all too often, we have been so focused on areas of disagreement that we have failed to look for areas of agreement. This bill signals that that chapter is closing and a new one is opening. For that, I'm grateful. We can and should make progress on issues of shared concern even as we continue to debate our differences. I would like to thank Representatives Ryan and DeLauro as well as Rachel Laser of Third Way for seeing the need for change, for identifying and articulating a common-ground agenda, and for their commitment to improving the lives of countless women, children, and families.

NARAL Pro-Choice America and NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio

Nancy Keenan, President and Kellie Copeland, Executive Director:

Americans want a future with a constructive and thoughtful debate over reproductive rights, where lawmakers on both sides of the issue can unify behind commonsense measures to improve women's reproductive-health-care options. Reps. Ryan and DeLauro have demonstrated how reaching across the divide to find common-ground solutions to prevent unintended pregnancy is possible; their bill includes a number of positive proposals to improve women's access to contraception and to support teen-pregnancy-prevention efforts. We also support the bill's aim to ensure that women who choose to carry their pregnancies to term are given the options and resources necessary to guarantee a healthy pregnancy. This approach contrasts greatly with the divisive and inflammatory rhetoric we see from too many lawmakers and organizations that oppose a woman's right to choose and refuse even to support access to birth control.

Recently, President Obama brought even more attention to the need for a common-ground approach in his speech at the University of Notre Dame by reiterating his call for change in tone of the debate over the right to choose. The president's speech mirrored many of the key themes that we have emphasized since first issuing a challenge for common ground in 2005. In that time, NARAL Pro-Choice America has worked with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Rep. Louise Slaughter, lawmakers who hold different views on abortion rights, to promote the Prevention First Act—the seminal example of common-ground proposals. NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio has worked with lawmakers to advance a measure modeled after the Prevention First Act at the state level. We at NARAL Pro-Choice America and NARAL Pro-Choice Ohio support the Ryan/DeLauro bill as a welcome and constructive addition to this effort.

After the tragic murder of Dr. George Tiller at his church in Kansas, now more than ever, we challenge groups opposing legal abortion to put a stop to the inflammatory rhetoric and the use of violence, and instead to embrace a new and more responsible approach to the debate.

National Abortion Federation

Vicki Saporta, President and CEO:

We commend Representatives Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) for introducing legislation which includes programs and policies that take important steps to address women's needs for access to reproductive health care. The Ryan-DeLauro bill expands access to family

planning for low-income women, includes initiatives to reduce unintended pregnancies, and provides support services to women and couples who choose to carry a pregnancy to term.

While we applaud the provisions of the Ryan-DeLauro bill, it is imperative that women are also able to access the abortion care they need. Abortion is an integral component of comprehensive reproductive health care. Women facing an unintended pregnancy deserve to have the information and resources they need to make the choices that are right for them. NAF remains committed to working to ensure that abortion is safe, legal, and accessible to promote health and justice for women.

National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy has long believed that reducing conflict and respecting a range of deeply held opinions is essential to making progress on the important issue of reducing both teen and unintended/unplanned pregnancy. The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act, authored by Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Tim Ryan (D-OH), is an important example of this reasonable, inclusive approach. The bill is a comprehensive, balanced approach to reduce the need for abortion by both helping to prevent unplanned pregnancy in the first place and supporting women and families once pregnancy occurs.

“Americans of good will differ in their views about abortion, but virtually all of us see value in lessening the need for abortion and would prefer that fewer women have to confront this difficult situation,” said Sarah Brown, CEO of the National Campaign. “Although the National Campaign does not take a position on abortion, we focus intensely on primary prevention—on reducing the teen and unplanned pregnancies that lie behind the vast majority of abortions. At present, there are 3 million unplanned pregnancies in America each year and most of these occur to women who are adults, not teens. Helping couples with pregnancy planning and prevention is an essential approach to reducing abortion. We can and must do better and this bill is an important step forward.”

At a time when the teen birth rate is increasing after 14 years of decline, and when unplanned pregnancy remains a widespread problem (accounting for almost half of all pregnancies in America each year), this bill offers important solutions to reduce both teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy. These remedies include: investing in teen pregnancy prevention through education, incentives and demonstration grants; supporting parents in communicating with their children about sex, values and healthy relationships; funding innovative approaches to help address unplanned pregnancy among community college students, which will in turn improve student success and academic completion; and improving access to family planning services for low-income women. These important provisions are accompanied in the bill by an additional set of constructive proposals that offer support to pregnant women. By including such a wide range of responsible policies, this bill builds much needed common ground and merits widespread support.

National Coalition of American Nuns

Sr. Donna Quinn:

The National Coalition of American Nuns, dedicated to studying, working and speaking out on issues related to human rights and social justice, is deeply committed to women's health and well being,

especially for poor women. In the context of that commitment, we make this statement of support for the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act as introduced by Representatives Rosa DeLauro and Tim Ryan.

This bill complements and expands women's ability to prevent pregnancy when they are not ready to parent by expanding support for sexuality education and contraceptive services and education, in accordance with the woman's own religious beliefs and values. This is a critical aspect of pregnancy prevention and fulfilling women's own goal of not needing abortion.

NCAN also strongly supports the bill's provisions which provide women who continue pregnancies with the economic, educational and social support they need to be good parents.

The provisions of this bill are long overdue. We applaud Representatives Ryan and DeLauro for their commitment to women's health and for their respect for women's rights.

National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association:

The National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association (NFPRHA) is pleased to support a bill to improve women's reproductive health care in this country. The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act, introduced by Reps. Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), is a common sense, common ground measure to prevent unintended pregnancy by increasing access to reproductive health care.

NFPRHA welcomes the Ryan-DeLauro bill as an important step forward in finding common ground ways to reduce unintended pregnancy and improve maternal and child health. The bill includes a number of important provisions, including a significant increase in funding for the Title X Family Planning program, a proven public health success story that has been drastically underfunded for far too long. The bill would also expand Medicaid coverage of family planning services for low-income women, another critical move toward improving women's health.

The bill also establishes new avenues of support for pregnant and parenting women, and includes responsible, comprehensive sex education programs intended to provide youth with important information about contraception and the prevention of STIs and unintended pregnancy.

Rather than getting caught up in divisive politics, Reps. Ryan and DeLauro have worked together to forge a new and practical path regarding reproductive health care. Along with other important prevention legislation such as the Prevention First Act, the Ryan-DeLauro bill sets the stage for a meaningful opportunity to achieve the universal goals of reducing unintended pregnancy and improving public health.

National Partnership for Women & Families

Debra L. Ness, President:

We commend Representatives Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) for their work to craft legislation to improve access to reproductive health services and information for women and families. The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act would fund programs that help women and teens avoid unintended pregnancies, and that help pregnant women and new parents get the health care and support services they need to raise healthy children.

At a time when almost half of all pregnancies in the United States including the vast majority of teen pregnancies are unintended, there is an urgent need to make contraceptive services more accessible and available. Widespread use of contraceptives can further reduce unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and the need for abortion — which remains a critically important health service that is too often out of reach for low-income women of reproductive age.

The cost of contraception can be significant and is a barrier to many women who want to access family planning services. The Ryan/DeLauro bill supports programs such as Title X and Medicaid, which provide essential family planning services and information to low-income women. It also supports targeted efforts to reduce unintended pregnancy among teens, including through comprehensive sex education programs that help equip young people to make informed decisions about their reproductive health.

In supporting programs that provide maternity health care services to low-income pregnant women, and nutrition and child care services for new parents, this legislation begins to address some of the many challenges low-income families face. At the same time, we recognize that access to a full range of reproductive health services is the most effective way for women to plan their families.

We thank Representatives Ryan and DeLauro for making prevention a priority, and for their commitment to improving the health and well-being of women and families.

National Women's Law Center

Marcia D. Greenberger, Co-President:

The National Women's Law Center supports this legislation, which takes important steps to reduce unintended pregnancies through common sense measures like improved access to contraceptives and is a start toward providing those who want to have children the support they need to have and raise a family.

The National Women's Law Center is also committed to assuring that women's full range of reproductive health needs are met, including access to abortion that is safe, legal and affordable.

NETWORK

Sister Simone Campbell, Executive Director:

This legislation gives me hope that we can finally begin to move beyond using pregnancy as a political wedge issue and to focus instead on providing women and families with the resources they need for

healthy pregnancies and babies. It is a real tragedy that discussion about abortion has deeply polarized our nation, thereby hindering actions that would effectively address its causes and outcomes. We must find ways to work together to discourage teen pregnancy through education about delaying sexual activity and to give women of all ages the support and information they need for healthy pregnancies. Campaigns to promote adoption and expanded adoption supports will help women bring their babies to term and into the arms of loving families. Additionally, increased funding for nutrition and child care programs will enable more families to meet their children's needs both before and after birth. It is time to work together to eliminate political posturing on this issue. We at NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, commend Representatives DeLauro and Ryan for their efforts to make this happen and we support the "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act" as a way forward for our nation.

Nicholas P. Cafardi, *Civil and Canon Lawyer; Professor and Former Dean, Duquesne University School of Law:*

Bismarck said that if you like laws or sausage, don't ever watch them being made. Believing Catholics will not be happy with the contraception assistance provided by the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act, but the legislation does so many other good and needful things that it is worth our support. For those of us who know abortion to be an unspeakable evil, it makes all the sense in the world to support an act that seeks to diminish, if not end, it. The Ryan-DeLauro bill does that. It addresses the root cause of so many abortions, namely the impoverished condition of the mother that leads to over half the abortions in America. If we love that child in the womb, recognizing him or her to be a human being with as many rights as we have, it makes all the sense in the world to take care of that child's mother. This effort does exactly that by providing necessary insurance, health care and living assistance to these needy mothers.

Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health:

Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health applauds the introduction of the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion, and Supporting Parents Act by Representatives Rosa DeLauro and Tim Ryan. Legislators on both sides of the aisle should support this bill to improve the reproductive health of our nation.

The medical community agrees: the most effective way to reduce the need for abortion is to lower the rate of unintended pregnancy by strengthening and expanding reproductive health services. This bill would help women and families prevent or space pregnancies as they see fit. It would also address a host of factors that contribute to the high rate of unintended pregnancy in the U.S.

We commend the act's commitment to Title X family planning funds. The bill would also give important support to pregnant women and new mothers so that they can keep themselves and their families healthy.

The act would bolster vital programs that address our country's high rate of teen pregnancy by helping adolescents make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. Abstinence-only policies have failed our teens; this bill would provide for medically accurate, comprehensive, and age-appropriate sexuality education that equips young people to make healthy choices.

We urge Congress to pass the Ryan-DeLauro bill. Every day, we see how our patients' reproductive health impacts their overall wellbeing. This bill would give families a chance to be healthy, strong, and prosperous.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Cecile Richards, President:

Planned Parenthood applauds Rep. Tim Ryan and Rep. Rosa DeLauro for proposing commonsense legislation that will help prevent unintended pregnancies and reduce the need for abortion by addressing its root causes. Planned Parenthood knows firsthand that women and men in America need access to basic, preventive health care. This legislation will increase access to critically needed affordable contraception, improve health care for low-income women and families, invest in comprehensive, medically accurate sex education, and support women in the choices they make. Simply put, it invests in prevention programs that work.

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director:

The "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act" is a powerful and promising response to the extreme ideological polarization that has, for too long, prevented constructive discussion about women's reproductive health. The time has long since passed for us to find a way to move the conversation forward by embracing our shared core values.

The Reform Jewish Movement has long been an advocate for women's reproductive rights and health and remains unequivocally committed to a woman's role as a moral decision maker regarding her reproductive rights and her right to choose as qualified by *Roe v. Wade*. Our Movement also deeply understands the complexity of these issues, and the medical, religious, familial, social, and other considerations that are involved in reproductive choices. The legislation introduced by Representatives Tim Ryan and Rosa DeLauro respects this complexity by supporting women in preventing unintended pregnancy through pregnancy and child bearing. This includes comprehensive sex education, increased access to contraception and family planning, as well as medical care and financial assistance for women and couples throughout pregnancy and children after birth.

I commend Representatives Ryan and DeLauro for addressing creatively an issue that has for too long divided those who should be working together to meet the needs of women, and offer my strong support for the "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Support Parents Act." Protecting women's health is a universal value.

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Rev. Dr. Carlton W. Veazey, President and CEO:

On behalf of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC), I am pleased to support the Preventing Unintended Pregnancy, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act. I applaud Representatives DeLauro and Ryan on their tireless efforts to develop legislation to expand access to reproductive health services and enhance life options for women.

This Act's support for family planning services will allow an increased number of low-income and uninsured women to determine when and whether to have children according to their own conscience and religious beliefs. The Act's provision for comprehensive sex education reflects the views of major faith traditions and their commitment to empowering young people with the knowledge to make responsible decisions. These faith communities take seriously their duty to instill a set of religious and moral values that will help guide young people to responsible life choices. They believe that it is the role of government to ensure that the nation's youth receive the facts - unblemished by ideology - that will protect them from disease and unintended pregnancy.

Being of faith means being engaged in the world. And like it or not, the facts are clear: 95 percent of Americans have sex before marriage, 80 percent of teen pregnancies are unintended and each year, 25 percent of American teens contract an STD. We want our young people to be safe. For that to happen, they must be informed by comprehensive sex education and have access to contraceptive services. Offering them anything less is irresponsible, dangerous and wrong.

Our hope is that these provisions will help eliminate the terrible disparity in access to reproductive health services that results in poor women being four times as likely to have an unintended pregnancy as their higher-income counterparts. Access to reproductive health information and services allows women to continue their education, thereby improving their economic status and the well-being of their families and their communities. U.S. religious denominations and an overwhelming majority of people of faith support the use of contraception and believe it is the moral and responsible path to follow.

The Act also provides much needed resources to help ensure a woman a healthy pregnancy and provides additional support that will make it possible for women who choose to continue their pregnancy to care for their children. RCRC and our members will continue to work hard to provide women the information and help they need to respond to unintended pregnancies in a manner consistent with their values and life goals.

We are grateful to Representatives DeLauro and Ryan for their commitment to the health and well-being of women and their families.

Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing

Rev. Debra W. Haffner, Director:

Ryan/DeLauro is a good piece of legislation that addresses many of the important issues, including comprehensive sexuality education, family planning, and support for pregnant and parenting women. Preventing unintended pregnancy, ensuring abortion access and funding family planning initiatives are intertwined issues and should be dealt with together. But this bill is only a piece of the reproductive health and justice agenda we hope to see.

In addition to reducing unintended pregnancies, we must work together to address the circumstances that result in the decision to have an abortion. Poverty, social inequities, lack of education, sexism, racism and unsupportive relationships can severely restrict a woman's ability to freely choose.

All of this is part of our religious and moral commitment to reproductive health and rights. Ryan/DeLauro is a first step -- but an important one nonetheless. And long, long overdue.

Rev. Adam Hamilton, *The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection*:

It can be argued that abortion was *the* issue that gave birth to the culture wars. For the first time in over thirty years people from both sides of this debate have come together to work towards several common goals: preventing unintended pregnancies, reducing the need for abortion and supporting low-income parents who are pregnant and choose to carry a child to term. I applaud Representatives Rosa DeLauro and Tim Ryan for working together in crafting legislation that will not only reduce the need for and frequency of abortions, but at the same time serve bring people from both sides of this contentious issue together around a common cause. I will be asking the 13,000 members of my congregation to support this legislation and encouraging the pastors I know to support it as well.

Rev. Derrick Harkins, *Senior Pastor, Nineteenth Street Baptist Church*:

As pastor of a large congregation with members who have wide ranging beliefs about abortion, I have had heart-wrenching conversations with women facing unintended pregnancy. Experience has taught me that a polarized debate does not address the intricacies of the issue of abortion or serve the needs of families. I am pleased beyond expression that we have a bill in Congress that approaches abortion with a spirit of compassion for women and families, and a spirit of respect for the values of the pro-choice and pro-life communities. The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act addresses many of the diverse needs and concerns I see in my own church, and it presents a historic opportunity for our nation to embrace the shared values that have gone unrecognized for too long.

Rev. Gabriel A. Salguero, *Executive and Public Policy Advisor, The Latino Leadership Circle*:

For too long in the national debate about abortion the root causes of abortions have been ignored. Certainly healthy and civil debates are markers of our democracy and should not be dismissed. As an Evangelical who holds to the sanctity of human life from conception to grave I believe we need to find ways to reduce abortions while supporting parents now. A way forward draws consensus around the shared goals of reducing the need for abortion, preventing unintended pregnancies, and improving the lives of women and families who need support. In the "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion, and Supporting Parents Act," I find a reasonable compromise that does not ask me to give up my commitment to life issues. I support this bill because it is a concrete way forward that does not sacrifice conviction.

Rev. Joseph A. Darby, *Senior Pastor, Morris Brown African Methodist Episcopal Church*:

The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act serves not only to meet the needs of women, children and families, but also to advance a new kind of politics in America – the movement toward common ground. For decades, the abortion debate in particular has suffered from mistrust and severe polarization, with each side planted securely in their

own yards, shouting at the enemy across the way. But a new dialogue rooted in mutual respect and shared values is taking root, and bold leaders on both sides of the abortion debate are stepping onto common ground in the public square, where even people who disagree fundamentally can speak to each other rather than at each other. As this sacred space grows, we are becoming a stronger nation and a better people.

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, *President, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference:*

The Ryan- DeLauro Bill, “Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act”, defuses the rancor and rhetoric surrounding the Abortion and Life Debate while addressing the causes of Abortion in a way that both Pro Life activists, and Pro Choice supporters can agree. Without compromising conviction or principle, this legislation stands to reconcile practical public policy with a common ground, third way moral imperative that will, at the end of day, reduce the number of abortions. It is impossible to address abortion reduction from the platform of demagoguery and partisanship. A sustainable Pro Life platform exists where the Vertical intersects with the Horizontal; the strongest point of the Christian Cross. I commend both Congressman Tim Ryan and Rosa DeLauro for meeting at the nexus of faith and public policy, the center of the Cross.

Richard Cizik, *President, The New Evangelicals:*

It's time for all sides to find common ground solutions to reduce the number of abortions in America. What's called for is legislation that will prevent the unintended pregnancies that lead to abortion and also provide help to pregnant women who need support. The Ryan-DeLauro bill warrants evangelical support because it wisely aims to accomplish both objectives. As a pro-lifer for over thirty years, and a lobbyist for evangelical causes who first joined these debates in 1980, I believe that this is the first legislation of its kind in over three decades that genuinely stands a chance of passing and realizing its goals. I say let's move forward together.

Ronald J. Sider, *President, Evangelicals for Social Action:*

The “Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act” represents a significant step forward in the struggle to reduce the number of abortions in the United States. Much more in addition to this bill is needed, but the nevertheless substantial progress here is important.

SIECUS- *Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States:*

We want to thank Representatives Tim Ryan and Rosa DeLauro for their efforts to bring together, in one piece of legislation, several key programs and policies that seek to improve sexual and reproductive health in our country. The “*Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act*” is an important piece of legislation that we are pleased to support.

No legislation is perfect nor can it fully and satisfactorily address the plethora of dimensions that arise from the need to address sexual and reproductive health. This is particularly true in our own country that has too long been inclined to fight these issues out on the extremes of a culture war and whose rationale for continued battle has collapsed under the weight and need for real, concrete answers to move us forward.

This bill represents just such a step forward. First, it sets aside the false choices that the culture war has passed off for too long as the legitimate boundaries of discourse and public policy. And it does so by supporting common sense approaches that will empower individuals to make more informed, responsible, and healthier decisions for themselves and their families.

We are particularly pleased that comprehensive sex education programs have been included in the bill and that the language closely mirrors the language from the Responsible Education About Life (REAL) Act. The REAL Act remains the "gold standard" for funding comprehensive sex education programs and much of it has found its way into this legislation. Comprehensive sex education works and the American people support it. Moreover, our federal system will help ensure that funded programs respect community norms and values while also ensuring that funded programs cannot focus on the narrow approach of teaching only abstinence.

The bill would also reauthorize the Title X family planning program and provide a much needed boost in funding that has been too long in coming. Additional efforts to expand and clarify the role of Medicaid are also present in the bill and represent progress. Access to both education and services are critical pieces that work hand in hand to improve our nation's health.

The bill would also provide much needed support for pregnant and parenting women to help ensure that they have the resources available to raise healthy children and that we are doing our moral best to break the cycle of intergenerational teen pregnancy and the poverty that too often accompanies unintended pregnancy.

Finally, we recognize that the framing of this bill creates discomfort for some in its potential to stigmatize the legally recognized right to abortion. We share your concerns, but believe the important pieces of this bill warrant our support. At the same time, we commit ourselves to the ongoing work with our colleagues to help ensure that all Americans have access to the full range of information and services to which they are entitled by right.

Sojourners

Jim Wallis, President:

For too long, the issue of abortion in our country has been a contentious and ultimately unproductive debate between simplified and polarizing positions of "life" and "choice." A far better approach is to advance a common ground dialogue with both sides that results in real solutions. Rep. Rosa DeLauro and Tim Ryan's "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act" addresses both how best to prevent unwanted pregnancies and support pregnant women who desire to carry their baby to term. It also makes adoption easier. This bill demonstrates

how searching for common ground can lead to higher ground, in ways that both sides of the debate can embrace. It could lead to genuine progress in reducing the number of abortions and improving the quality of life for women and children --all by addressing the real issues that lead to abortion. Americans are divided on the moral and legal status of abortion, but most feel the tragedy of abortion and believe that we currently have far too many for a good society. Tim Ryan and Rosa DeLauro are wise public servants who are trying to unite us around the new common ground of abortion reduction, one that people on both sides of the debate can agree to. Helping young people to delay sexual activity, preventing the pregnancies that people don't want, economically supporting low-income women to give them a real choice about having a child, and encouraging adoption all will reduce abortion in America; and who could be against any of that? Sojourners and I strongly support this good and wise piece of legislation and applaud the creative solutions it offers for real action.

The Episcopal Church

Maureen Shea, Director of Government Relations:

On behalf of the Episcopal Church, I am pleased to endorse the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act, sponsored by Reps. Tim Ryan and Rosa DeLauro.

We believe "that the beginning of new human life, because it is a gift of the power of God's love for his people, and thereby sacred, should not and must not be undertaken unadvisedly or lightly but in full accordance of the understanding for which this power to conceive and give birth is bestowed by God."

We recognize that there are differing views on critical aspects of this gift. However, we believe this legislation is a faithful and honest approach to address areas in which those of diverse views can find common ground.

In order to ensure that the gift of life not be "undertaken unadvisedly or lightly," this legislation seeks to prevent unintended pregnancies particularly for teens; it restores and expands family planning programs for low-income women; it gives childbirth support to women and new parents, as well as students so that they can continue their studies; and it provides important information and financial support for those wishing to adopt.

The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act is an important step toward addressing the two primary causes of abortion - unintended pregnancies and the need to assist pregnant women who cannot afford a child. Our Book of Common Prayer affirms that "the birth of a child is a joyous and solemn occasion in the life of a family." We know, however, that for many that vision is not the reality they face. We believe that by addressing these two important issues, this comprehensive legislation will be a significant step toward changing that reality into the joy we envision for all parents and children.

The General Board of Church & Society of The United Methodist Church:

The General Board of Church & Society of The United Methodist Church affirms the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act, sponsored by Reps. Tim Ryan and Rosa DeLauro.

Our official church statements express support for the need to prevent unplanned pregnancies and reduce the need for abortions. The Social Principle on abortion states: "We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of conditions that may cause them to consider abortion; The Church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies."

The DeLauro/Ryan bill espouses a prevention philosophy and approach which, in the long run, will enhance the quality of life for many. With teen pregnancy rates rising in the United States, we need to ensure access to comprehensive sex education as well as resources such as contraception and family planning services. Our statement on Responsible Parenthood undergirds this belief: "We therefore encourage our churches and common society to: make information and materials available so all can exercise responsible choice in the area of conception controls....We support adequate public funding and increased participation in family planning services by public and private agencies, including church-related institutions, with the goal of making such services accessible to all, regardless of economic status or geographic location.

Believing that children are a gift from God, we support women and girls having access to a wide range of options to create healthy families which is why the provisions in this bill for parents are important. Provisions such as nutrition, child care and parental training, expanded tax credits for low income parents and the reduction of domestic violence will help create stable families and, thereby, strengthen communities.

We urge the Congress to adopt this piece of legislation.

The Rebecca Project for Human Rights

Malika Saada Saar, Executive Director and Founder:

Please know that the Rebecca Project for Human Rights, a national policy and advocacy organization for vulnerable families, offers its support for the "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act" that seeks to offer common ground policies on abortion by assisting vulnerable mothers and addressing the underlying reasons for unintended pregnancies.

It is our hope that the legislation in the process of its movement forward will additionally address the intersection between gendered violence and teen pregnancy, especially in the lives of vulnerable girls. We also hope that the legislation will extend its commitment to vulnerable mothers and families by supporting the distinct maternal health needs of mothers at the margins, including expanding access to family-based treatment for mothers and their children and ending the shackling of incarcerated mothers during labor and delivery. There is significant common ground for policies that recognize the sacredness of girls' lives and that honor mothering.

The Rebecca Project is nevertheless pleased to “Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act”. The legislation provides a groundbreaking approach to facilitating healthy, strong, and stable families.

Third Way

Rachel Laser, Culture Program Director:

America’s great diversity brings along with it differing and heart-felt views about the right to an abortion in this country. Although this divide will continue, the tone of the debate is shifting, enabling shared values to emerge and new kinds of joint ventures to unfold. The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act is proof of this historic shift.

Under the leadership of pro-life Congressman Tim Ryan and pro-choice Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, courageous pro-life and pro-choice leaders have come together for the first time to identify a comprehensive set of policies about reducing the need for abortion, preventing unintended pregnancies and supporting pregnant women and families. The bill demonstrates that our shared values include comprehensive sex education, increasing access to birth control for low-income women, enlisting parents in teaching their teens values around healthy relationships, and also promoting adoption, enabling pregnant and parenting students to finish school and expanding health care for countless women and families.

President Obama has committed to finding common ground on abortion. The Ryan-DeLauro bill is the roadmap for the common ground he seeks.

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

Rob Keithan, Director, Washington Office for Advocacy:

Our Unitarian Universalist religious tradition has long supported giving young people the information and resources they need to make healthy and responsible decisions about sexuality and parenting. The Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act, introduced by Representatives Tim Ryan and Rosa DeLauro, is an important, common ground bill that appropriately prioritizes the health and well-being of youth and expecting mothers. It’s about time we put effectiveness ahead of ideology.

United Church of Christ:

Since 1971, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has supported the need for family planning programs, access to safe and legal abortion and contraception, pastoral counseling for women and families facing unintended or problematic pregnancies, comprehensive sex education in the public schools, and programs that support whatever decision a woman makes when faced with an unintended pregnancy, including increased publically funded childcare. The United Church of Christ has opposed any effort to limit options available to women believing that she has the responsibility to make the right decision for herself and her family which is consistent with her faith, beliefs, moral convictions and religious tradition.

For more than fifteen years, the United Church of Christ has promoted the use of a comprehensive sexuality education program in our congregations which is evidence-based, medically-accurate and age-appropriate, and includes our faith values of self worth, health, responsibility and justice. This curriculum, called *Our Whole Lives*, has distinct components for all ages – first grade through adulthood.

The United Church of Christ affirms the Ryan-DeLauro Act which includes pregnancy prevention programs, restoration of funding for family planning services, support for the parental role, comprehensive sexuality education which incorporates parent/guardian-child communication, access to childcare and nutritional support programs for low-income families, and after school programs, among other measures. It is both an Act to strengthen proven prevention strategies as well as support families and children through education and intervention, and one which recognizes the particular danger women often face during a vulnerable time in their lives.

The enthusiastic success of *Our Whole Lives* tells us that it is never too early to begin education with children about who they are, how their bodies work, and how they can make decisions that are right and healthy for them. The adults responsible for the growth and development of children also need this education and the “Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Support Parents Act” will move our society in a direction which incorporates realistic and accurate knowledge with action.

Vivian Berryhill, *President and Founder, National Coalition of Pastors' Spouses:*

For me, this legislation offers an opportunity for those—who have for a very long time been on opposite ends of this debate and who are unapologetically entrenched in their beliefs and convictions—to finally find common ground on this vital and fundamental issue: reducing abortions by addressing the root causes.

As a Black woman, a mother, and a pro-lifer, I am woefully aware of the struggles many teens in our culture face each day as a result of unintended pregnancies and not being able to afford the care of a child. From my vantage point, I see year-after-year well-meaning politicians, special interest groups, and others ensconced in the lofty theater of debate, yet unwilling to compromise on this issue. I also see teen pregnancy numbers continue rising—as each day another black teenage boy and girl’s life is dramatically altered because of an unintended pregnancy and coping with the stress associated with caring for a child neither was prepared for—while this debate continues among the leaders.

Understanding that there is no “perfect” bill. This bill, however, contains appropriate language that can be embraced by varying faiths without having to surrender their core values: comprehensive sex education with an emphasis on abstinence, and a greater involvement of parents in preventing teen pregnancy.

I am pleased to, not only lend my voice to support the Ryan-DeLauro bill, but encourage other faith leaders in the African American community to do likewise.

Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual

Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, Co-directors:

The Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER), a non-profit educational center that promotes feminist work in religion, supports the Ryan-DeLauro Bill "Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act." This bill incorporates many of the values that our colleagues in a variety of religions hold, and represents one way forward on difficult social issues.

Prevention of unintended pregnancies is a goal about which there is general agreement. Using this as a springboard, the bill moves in the direction of a consensus that will eventually assure women's well being and choice. We support such programs along with access to complete reproductive health care. Likewise, supporting women who wish to continue their pregnancies but face financial and social obstacles is a strategy that squares with our religious commitments. Of special interest to us is attention to issues of sexual and domestic violence that are so often at the root of women's problems.

We look forward to passage of this bill as necessary move to assure women's well being. As religious feminists we applaud the effort and support those who will make it law.