

Co-Sponsor the Emergency Contraception Education Act (H.R. 3372)

September 20, 2007



Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 100,000 bipartisan members of the American Association of University Women, I urge you to **cosponsor the Emergency Contraception Education Act (H.R. 3372)**. On the one-year anniversary of emergency contraception's move to an over-the-counter medication, AAUW believes now is the time to establish a public-education campaign to increase public and health-care provider awareness of emergency contraception.

Emergency contraception, also known as Plan B or the "morning-after" pill, is a safe, effective, and FDA-approved medication that prevents pregnancy if taken soon after sex. Emergency contraception does not cause abortion; rather it prevents pregnancy. In 2006, the FDA legalized the purchase of emergency contraception without a prescription for women over the age of 18.

AAUW supports efforts to increase education and access to emergency contraception for all women, including minors. Greater awareness of and improved access to emergency contraception could help reduce the rates of unintended pregnancy and abortion in this country. Researchers estimate that widespread use of EC could potentially prevent up to half of the approximately 3 million unintended pregnancies that occur annually in the U.S., and one study has suggested that broader use could help prevent as many as 700,000 pregnancies that now result in abortion.¹

Despite recent wider availability of emergency contraception, one in three women of reproductive age remains unaware of the method to prevent pregnancy following sexual intercourse.² In addition, only one in four obstetricians/gynecologists regularly discuss emergency contraception with their patients.³ Emergency contraception is an effective back-up form of birth control, but it is also a medication that requires timeliness. Increasing awareness of emergency contraception empowers women to make informed decisions concerning their reproductive health. Furthermore, without well informed doctors, patients lack resources for more information about emergency contraception. AAUW trusts that all women can make informed decisions about their reproductive health and public education is a necessary aspect of this equation.

AAUW supports this public education measure that is a unique collaboration between pro-choice and pro-life lawmakers -- Democrats and Republicans alike -- and offers members an excellent opportunity to support a commonsense measure to prevent unintended pregnancy. We urge you to **cosponsor the Emergency Contraception Education Act (H.R. 3372)**. To become a cosponsor contact Cari Simon (Cari.Simon@mail.house.gov or 202/225.3615) in Rep. Louise Slaughter's office. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Tracy Sherman, government relations manager, at 202/785-7730.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Maatz
Director, Public Policy and Government Relations

¹ Kaiser Family Foundation, 2004 Kaiser Women's Health Survey, July 2005. <http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/3344-03.pdf>

² Kaiser Family Foundation, 2004 Kaiser Women's Health Survey, July 2005. <http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/3344-03.pdf>

³ Kaiser Family Foundation, *Emergency Contraceptive Pills*. February 2004.