



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

January 31, 2018

CONTACT: Paloma Zuleta  
202-812-4477  
[pzuleta@powertodecide.org](mailto:pzuleta@powertodecide.org)

## DECLINES IN TEEN PREGNANCY AND CHILDBEARING LEAD TO BILLIONS IN PUBLIC SAVINGS

(Washington, D.C.) — More than two decades of investments in prevention programs and services have led to significant declines in unplanned pregnancies and birth rates among teens in the United States. New analysis from [Power to Decide](#), the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy, shows that these declines resulted in public savings of \$4.4 billion in 2015 alone.

“Ensuring that all young people have the power to decide if, when and under what circumstances to get pregnant helps them achieve the futures they want,” said Ginny Ehrlich, Chief Executive Officer, Power to Decide. “Over the past two decades, we have invested in access to contraception and quality sex education. These prevention programs have been strong investments, as they have contributed to ever declining teen pregnancy and birth rates and have consequently saved the public billions of dollars. If further investments were made in these vital programs, we estimate that an additional \$1.9 billion could be saved each year.”

Since peaking in 1991, the teen birth rate has declined 67%, and the related savings to taxpayers have been significant. The new Power to Decide analysis reflects the public sector savings that are directly tied to medical and economic supports provided during pregnancy and infancy for teen mothers specifically through Medicaid and the Women Infant and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) programs.

Yet despite the impressive record of success as well as significant savings to taxpayers, the current Administration has recently issued directives that threaten continued efforts in this area including access to quality sex education and contraceptive care.

“Although the nation has made historic strides, we cannot mistake this progress for victory,” Ehrlich added. “We must maintain and expand investments that offer young people the support they need to align their intentions and their actions. Most importantly, we need to protect women’s access to no- or low-cost contraception. We also must continue to advocate for public financing through the Title X family planning program and Medicaid. These efforts help ensure that all women, especially those in need, can continue to access high quality contraceptive care and supplies. These efforts allow young people to live life on their own terms, and it also happens to be sound economic policy. Studies suggest that we save \$7 for every \$1 invested in reproductive health care.”

Despite declines in all 50 states and among all racial/ethnic groups, persistent disparities remain—teen pregnancy rates for Latina and African American women are still more than twice as high as compared

to their white counterparts. In addition, more than 19 million women in need of publicly funded contraception live in contraceptive deserts, where they do not have reasonable access in their county to a public clinic that offers the full range of contraceptive methods.

Power to Decide compiled and analyzed the most recent data available on teen childbearing (national and state) as well as from public assistance programs, including Medicaid, WIC, TANF and SNAP where young mothers are likely participants. To view the complete results of our analysis—including state by state results visit <https://PowerToDecide.org/savings>.

**Power to Decide** is a private, non-partisan, non-profit organization that works to ensure all people—no matter who they are, where they live, or what their economic status might be—have the power to decide if, when, and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child. Please visit us at [www.PowerToDecide.org](http://www.PowerToDecide.org) or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.