



*News From*  
The California Women's Law Center

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Statement from Katie Buckland, Executive Director of the California Women's Law Center, on California Ballot Initiative Proposition 85:

“Proposition 85 endangers the lives of California teens. By requiring teens to notify their parents if they need an abortion, many teens will delay getting the health care that they need.

Those teens that are able to communicate with their parents without fear of retribution will speak to their parents without this legislation. However, many teenage girls suffer from physical abuse and may even be pregnant as a result of incest.

While the initiative technically allows these girls to go before a judge and receive a waiver, that system is unworkable and unmanageable. Many teenagers have no access to transportation and no knowledge of how the court system works.

Instead, the girls who have a well-founded fear of their parents will try to induce a miscarriage by any means necessary. One teenager in Michigan, a state with a notification statute, recently tried to induce a miscarriage by having her boyfriend hit her in the stomach with a baseball bat every day.

There is absolutely zero evidence that a government mandate will improve communication between teens and their families. The passage of Proposition 85 will only lead to irresponsible sexual behavior in teens, as studies have shown that they do not refrain from having sex when reproductive health services are not guaranteed to be confidential. Instead, adolescents continue to have sex, but they will stop getting the services they need to make healthy, informed decisions.

Proposition 85 will disproportionately affect poor girls and girls who fear parental abuse or abandonment. Notification may increase the number of unwanted births and put women at greater risk by delaying their ability to terminate the pregnancy until later months.

Teen pregnancy rates have been in steady decline without this law. It would be far smarter for us to build on the gains we have made in education and pregnancy prevention than to take a huge step backward with Proposition 85.”

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