

**Testimony to the Committee on Health and Human Services
For the Performance Oversight Hearing on Department of Health**

**Sydnee Fitzpatrick
Young Women's Project Peer Educator**

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Hello Councilmember Alexander and other Committee members. My name is Sydnee Fitzpatrick and I am junior at Woodrow Wilson high school. I work with the Young Women's Project and also serve as a mentor for other youth. After I graduate I want to go to GW and then go to law school and become a lawyer.

I am here to testify about teen pregnancy. I feel like pregnancy makes the lives of teens more complicated, so we should help teens prevent pregnancy more.

I think there is a lot of teen pregnancy because DC youth do not know all their options.

For example, one of my friends says she would have gotten an abortion if they were not so expensive. She did not know about the resources DC has to provide financial assistance to individuals seeking abortion services. My friend should have gotten more information from our school nurse.

In addition, I currently know a girl who's 14 years old and is 6 months pregnant. I don't think she was on birth control because when I asked her she didn't know about it or how it worked or even where to get it from. There are many teens that do not know their full birth control options. A lot of people know about the pill, but a pill is so hard to keep track of. Even I take medication every day and I forget to take it a lot. Teens do not know about LARCS, know that LARCS are free, or even where to get them. LARCS are better for teens because they do not have to worry about taking medications every day at the same time. Teens need to know about LARCS and other birth control methods. Teens should get this information from the school nurse.

All kids know about are condoms, but some people don't like to wear them or their partner(s) might not want them to wear them. That is why young women should be familiar with female condoms so that they can use them if their male partner does not want to wear a condom. Even if there are a large amount of girls who know about female condoms there is a still a good amount of these girls that do not even know how to use one. This is sad.

I think that there can be some options that can prevent pregnancy in our schools like:

- Keep giving funds to DOH for youth stipends. This work is important and teens should be compensated just like adults are.
- Have a certified person, like a nurse practitioner or doctor to come in and prescribe birth control, or put in the implant once per month.
- Open more clinics close to schools or some in each ward. Clinics could simply put up posters inside the schools they are close to that give a brief description about their services
- Make the process short and easy at a teen friendly clinic. When I say short and easy I mean no insurance, no parent consent forms, and possibly a small fee.
- Peer educators, like myself, should hold sessions in the lunch room and in classrooms. I already do these session and I tell my peers about pregnancy options so if they were to get pregnant they could list out there options and then decide what they would like to do. I also give them option where to get these services at, ff the service is free and if not how much is it.
- All schools should have a "pregnancy prevention" assembly that will be fun and also educational. There was one assembly at my school "should could dream" tour they played new music, threw things in the audience, gave out fun scenarios they had colorful lights. This tour was basically to tell kids to follow their dreams, don't fall for the wrong tricks even when you down just keep going.

I think all my ideas would reduce teen pregnancy because teens would actually have legit resources that they could go to and get the help they need.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.