

## January 13, 2009 - Senator Reid, Reps. Slaughter and DeGette Introduce the Prevention First Act

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senator Reid, Reps. Slaughter and DeGette Introduce the Prevention First Act

Legislation provides women with the tools they need to prevent unintended pregnancies

Washington, DC &ndash; Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) joined Rules Committee Chairwoman Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY) and Energy and Commerce Committee Vice Chair Diana DeGette (D-CO) to introduce the Prevention First Act, legislation that will improve access to women&rsquo;s health care, reduce the rate of unintended pregnancy and reduce abortions &ndash; all while saving scarce public health dollars.

&ldquo;The United States has among the highest rates of unintended pregnancies of all industrialized nations. Half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended, and nearly half of those end in abortion,&rdquo; said Majority Leader Reid. &ldquo;It is time to come together and enact effective policies that will help to prevent unintended pregnancies, reduce the number of abortions, and improve access to health care for women. We can find not only common ground, but also common sense in our Prevention First Act.&rdquo;

“If we want to reduce the number of abortions in this country, the methodology is clear — empower women to prevent unintended pregnancies through education and access to contraception,” said Louise Slaughter. “For every dollar spent on family planning services, it is estimated that almost four dollars is saved in public health spending. This comprehensive approach to protecting women’s reproductive health will not only decrease the spread of STDs and reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies, but save money.”

“It is imperative that we implement a comprehensive, medically accurate, science -based approach to reducing the need for abortion,” said Congresswoman DeGette. “The United States has a much higher rate of unintended pregnancy than other developed nations. The Prevention First Act is the key to changing that.”

A new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that the nation’s teen pregnancy rate has increased for the first time in 15 years. This legislation would take a number of steps to reduce unintended pregnancies including:

- Increase Funding for the National Family Planning Program (Title X).
- Expand Medicaid Family Planning Services.
- End Insurance Discrimination Against Women.
- Improve Awareness about Emergency Contraception (EC).
- Provide Compassionate Assistance for Rape Victims.
- Reduce Teen Pregnancy.
- Ensure that All Federal Programs Provide Medically Accurate Information. Research shows, and a majority of the public believes, that improving access to family planning services is the most effective way to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and to reduce abortions.

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