



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 521

Resolution urging the United States Congress to pass HR 3887 and S.1990, legislation that would establish a public education and awareness program relating to emergency contraception.

By Council Members Gioia, Moskowitz, Quinn, Boyland, Reyna, Clarke, Baez, Gerson, Jackson, Koppell, Lopez, Nelson, Perkins, Recchia, Reed, Weprin, Brewer and Katz

Whereas, Emergency contraception is a medication used to prevent a woman from ovulating, or, if she has already ovulated, to prevent an egg from subsequently being fertilized or implanted in the uterine wall, thereby preventing pregnancy when other contraceptive methods have failed or unprotected intercourse has occurred; and

Whereas, In 1997, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved certain combinations of the medications that are used in standard birth control, including estrogen and progesterone, as safe and effective methods of reducing the risk of pregnancy after sex; and

Whereas, The FDA approved guidelines for emergency contraceptives call for two doses of hormones, taken 12 hours apart from each other, where the first pill must be taken within 72 hours; and

Whereas, An article in the New England Journal of Medicine claimed that the use of emergency contraception could prevent as many as 1.7 million unintended pregnancies that occur each year in the United States, including as many as 800,000 pregnancies which now result in abortion; and

Whereas, In 1999, Washington State completed a 2-year, pilot project that enabled women to receive emergency contraceptives without a doctor's prescription, which resulted in the largest decline in adolescent pregnancy and abortion rates in that state in 20 years; and

Whereas, There are several barriers to accessing emergency contraception within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse, including a physician's limited office hours and lack of adequate information about the function of such medication; and

Whereas, Many physicians and women are under the misconception that emergency contraception is the same as the abortion pill, rather than a medication that will inhibit ovulation and prevent fertilization from occurring; and

Whereas, According to a Kaiser Family Foundation study in the year 2000, 90% of women aged 18-44 have never heard of emergency contraception or did not know how or when to use it; and

Whereas, While the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Medical Association have endorsed the use of emergency contraceptives as safe and effective contraceptive methods, many physicians claim that they are too unfamiliar with the medication to discuss it during routine sessions; and

Whereas, A Kaiser Family Foundation survey entitled "Women's Health Care Providers' Experiences with Emergency Contraception," found that only 31 percent of physicians prescribe them on a regular basis (more than five times a year); and

Whereas, One of the targets included in Healthy People 2010, published by the Office of the Surgeon General in the year 2000, was to increase the number of health care providers who provide emergency contraception to their patients; and

Whereas, HR 3887 and S 1990 would direct the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration to develop and disseminate to the public and to health care providers information on emergency contraception; and

Whereas, This legislation would mandate that materials disseminated contain, at minimum, information on the use, safety, efficacy, and the availability of emergency contraception; and

Whereas, Greater use of emergency contraception would reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and abortions; and

Whereas, Emergency contraceptives are an important reproductive health option, as they are the only means of preventing a pregnancy after unprotected sex or if contraception has failed; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the New York City Council urges the United States Congress to pass HR 3887 and S.1990, legislation that would establish a public education and awareness program relating to emergency contraception.

DR
LS#1133

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