



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 523

Resolution urging the New York State Legislature to adopt bills A.9653 and S.6323, which would reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by increasing access to emergency contraception for women in New York.

By Councilmembers Quinn, Gioia, Moskowitz, Clarke, Boyland, Reyna, Gerson, Jackson, Koppell, Lopez, Nelson, Perkins, Recchia, Reed, Sanders, Weprin, DeBlasio, Brewer and Katz; also Council Members Martinez and Seabrook

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, Emergency contraceptives are not a substitute for regular contraceptives and do not protect against sexually transmitted diseases; 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, Emergency contraception is not the same as the abortion pill, but rather it is a higher dose of the active ingredients in birth control pills which will inhibit ovulation and prevent fertilization from occurring; 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, Emergency contraception will reduce a woman's risk of pregnancy by up to 89% if taken within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse; and

Whereas, There are several barriers to accessing emergency contraception within the 72 hour time limit, including a physician's limited office hours, inconvenient locations of doctor's offices, providers not dispensing such medication due to religious objections, and misinformation about its function; and

Whereas, According to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey, only 2% of women aged 18-44 have used emergency contraceptives, suggesting that most women are not familiar with the medication or have not been able to access it; and

Whereas, A.9653 and S.6323, bills which have been introduced in the New York State legislature, would amend the education law to allow registered nurses and pharmacists to dispense emergency contraceptives with a non-patient specific order that is written by a licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner, or licensed midwife; and

Whereas, This legislation would also create a collaborative agreement between physicians and pharmacists, removing some of the obstacles women face in obtaining emergency contraceptives; and

Whereas, The FDA is currently considering a request to make emergency contraception an over-the-counter pharmaceutical, a proposal that is supported by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Medical Association; and

Whereas, England, New Zealand, France and the states of Washington, Alaska and California have all passed laws making emergency contraception accessible at pharmacies; and

Whereas, Until the FDA switches the status of emergency contraceptives from prescription to over-the-counter, this legislation would create a system that would significantly facilitate a woman's accessibility to such medications; and

Whereas, Making emergency contraception easily accessible to women in a timely fashion will improve women's reproductive health; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the New York City Council urges the New York State Legislature to adopt bills A.9653 and S.6323, which would reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by increasing access to emergency contraception for women in New York.

DR
LS #1041

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