

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Interested Parties  
**FROM:** Planned Parenthood Federation of America and  
National Women's Law Center  
**DATE:** July 12, 2007  
**RE:** Application of Research Findings

*On behalf of Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the National Women's Law Center, Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., has undertaken a comprehensive multi-stage research project focused on issues surrounding reproductive health and abortion. The research was driven by several core objectives, including identifying policy opportunities to advance a pro-family planning, pro-reproductive rights agenda.*

*The first stage of research involved six focus groups among voters who express ambivalence about abortion policy. This qualitative stage was followed a large-scale national survey of 1,870 voters with oversamples of African-American and Hispanic voters.*

*This research differs from other recent research efforts in at least two regards. First, this research project explicitly seeks to build on the valuable research that already has been done in this area. Second, and related, this research's scope is entirely focused on understanding these issues within a policy context; that is, rather than delving into people's personal feelings about abortion and reproductive health issues, this research is purposefully limited to understanding what voters want government to do and how voters want policymakers to act in addressing these issues.*

## Policy Opportunities

**1** A wide range of pro-family planning and pro-reproductive rights policy opportunities enjoy strong support from all types of voters. Importantly, the backdrop to these policy opportunities is a national climate—clearly revealed by the data—that is centered around voters' desire for change in public policy and government action on issues surrounding reproductive health care and abortion, rather than continuing with the status quo.

In fact, voters overwhelmingly describe themselves as dissatisfied with the country's approach to reproductive health issues; by 58% to 24% they say the country is headed off on the wrong track rather than in the right direction on issues such as sex education, contraception, unintended pregnancy, and abortion. Driving this frustration is a strong desire for a greater emphasis on prevention, including broader access to comprehensive sex education.

Policymakers who remain silent on these issues place themselves within a status quo framework that is both deficient and incomplete in the minds of voters.

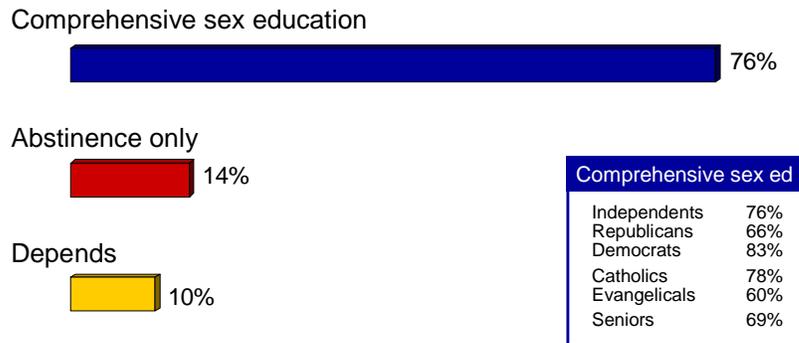
**2** Unequivocally, the unifying issue on voters' agenda for government and policymakers centers around the need for better sex education;

in fact, a majority of voters in nearly every demographic category, including Democrats, Republicans, and independents, as well as Catholics and evangelical Christians, support comprehensive sex education<sup>1</sup>.

## Comprehensive Sex Education In Public Schools

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### Preference for What U.S. Public Schools Should Teach



**3** Voters also strongly support a variety of different legislative efforts to expand access to contraception; opposition to so-called “pharmacy refusal” is an important foundation of this sentiment. Voters overwhelmingly support measures aimed at “protecting the right of individuals to get contraception without government interference or intrusion” (75% strongly favor), “making it easier for women at all income levels to obtain contraceptives” (73% strongly favor), and “requiring insurance plans to cover contraception if the plan also covers prenatal care for pregnant women” (61% strongly favor).

Although a majority of voters admit that they have never heard of pharmacists refusing to fill doctors’ prescriptions on the basis of moral or religious objections, opposition to “pharmacy refusal” is a strong rallying point for many of them—71% of voters say that pharmacists should not be allowed to refuse to fill prescriptions on moral or religious grounds, including majorities of nearly every voter demographic such as Republicans (56%), Catholics (73%), and evangelical Christians (53%).

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<sup>1</sup> “Comprehensive sex education” is defined as “information that is age-appropriate, medically accurate, and includes information about abstinence as well as information about the risks and benefits of contraception to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS.”

**Support for Contraceptive Coverage**

% who strongly favor each possible bill

	<u>All Voters</u> %	<u>“Conflicted” Voters**</u> %
Protect the right of individuals to get contraception without government interference or intrusion	75	82
Make it easier for women at all income levels to obtain contraceptives	73	82
Require insurance plans to cover contraception if the plan also covers prenatal care for pregnant women	61	66

\*\*\* “Conflicted voters” are defined as voters who say that abortion should be legal only in extreme cases such as rape, incest, and to save the mother’s life, but who also say they do not want to see Roe v. Wade overturned and can accept someone else’s position on abortion even if they would not make the same decision.

**4** Voters strongly support a broad array of other policy initiatives ranging from ensuring the accuracy of information provided at publicly funded crisis pregnancy centers to protecting women and health care providers from clinic violence. Support for every policy initiative tested is even stronger among “conflicted” voters than among voters overall—the data consistently demonstrate that a proactive policy dialogue with these voters is especially critical for policymakers to initiate in seeking to connect with this unique constituency’s goals.

**Additional Proactive Policy Solutions**

% who strongly favor each possible bill

	<u>All Voters</u> %	<u>“Conflicted” Voters**</u> %
Require public schools to inform parents about whether or not their children are being taught the risks and benefits of contraception and how to prevent diseases such as HIV and AIDS	76	80
Require public schools to be teach comprehensive sex education, which includes information about contraception, abstinence, and how to avoid sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS	75	81
Make sure that publicly funded crisis pregnancy centers cannot give women false or misleading information about their pregnancy or the options available to them, including abortion	73	77
Require pharmacies to dispense contraception to patients without discrimination or delay	73	79
Ensure that publicly funded crisis pregnancy centers provide pregnant women with information about the full range of pregnancy options	71	83
Protect women and health care providers against clinic violence and harassment from anti-abortion protestors by increasing penalties for these acts	71	81
Launch a major effort to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies by both increasing the availability of contraception for low-income women and by providing teens comprehensive sex education	67	74
Protect patients and health care providers entering abortion clinics by making it illegal for anti-abortion protestors to videotape them and post their pictures on the Internet	67	74

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Increase the availability of contraception and provide support, such as health care and child care to balance work and family responsibilities, for women who choose to have a child	61	70
Prevent state governments from restricting abortion in cases where a woman's health is in jeopardy	59	64

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