

Birth Control

In 1965, the United States Supreme Court issued *Griswold v. Connecticut* which ruled that, for the first time, *married* couples had a constitutional right to use contraception. Later in 1972, Supreme Court granted *unmarried* couples the constitutional right to use birth control in the case *Eisenstadt v. Baird*. Due to these two landmark United States Supreme Court cases, birth control has become a routine part of the daily lives of millions of Americans for several decades. Still, the United States has one of the highest rates of unintended pregnancy in the industrialized world. Half of the six million pregnancies that occur among American women each year are unintended.¹

- The best way to prevent unintended pregnancies is to ensure that women and families have access to contraceptive services.
- Contraception is basic health care used by most women and couples at some point in their lifetime.

In Virginia

- In Virginia 10% (152,480 of the 1,590,210) of women of childbearing age become pregnant each year.²
- Virginia has the 32nd highest teenage pregnancy rate of any state.³
- In Virginia, 846,100 women are in need of contraceptive services and supplies. Of these, 371,640 women need publicly supported contraceptive services because they have incomes below 250% of the federal poverty level (251,710) or are sexually active teenagers (119,930).⁴

Recent Developments

- In 2004 and 2005, the Birth Control Protection Act (BCPA) was introduced to protect contraception from restrictive laws like state-scripted counseling and mandatory delays. The legislation was defeated both times.
- The Birth Control Protection Act is being introduced in the 2007 legislative session in order to protect contraception in Virginia.

To see how your legislator voted in past years on the Birth Control Protection Act, check out our 2005-2006 Reproductive Rights Report.

For more information on this Fact Sheet or other Planned Parenthood issues go to www.ppav.org or contact ppav@ppfa.org.

¹ Guttmacher Institute. 2006 Contraception Counts: Virginia.

² Guttmacher Institute. 2006 Contraception Counts: Virginia.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.