



2011 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 61

February 10, 2012 – Introduced by Senators RISSER, TAYLOR and C. LARSON, cosponsored by Representatives BERCEAU, ZAMARRIPA, SINICKI, BEWLEY, ROYS, BERNARD SCHABER, GRIGSBY, POPE-ROBERTS, RINGHAND, BILLINGS, C. TAYLOR, POCAN, TURNER, HINTZ and SEIDEL. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** recognizing January 22–28, 2012, as reproductive rights awareness
2 week.

3 Whereas, women comprise more than half of the population of the United
4 States and are solely responsible for childbearing; and

5 Whereas, women who plan their pregnancies are more likely to seek prenatal
6 care, improving their own health and the health of their children; and

7 Whereas, the United States ranks 30th in the world in its rate of maternal
8 mortality and has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality among all developed
9 nations; and

10 Whereas, family planning services improve health care outcomes and wellness
11 for women and families, access to family planning is directly linked to declines in
12 maternal and infant mortality rates, and women who do not receive prenatal care are
13 three to four times more likely to die after a live birth than are women who have
14 received even minimal prenatal care; and

1 Whereas, contraception enables women to better prevent unintended
2 pregnancies and plan for pregnancy when they do want to have a child, and publicly
3 funded contraceptive services and supplies prevent nearly two million unintended
4 pregnancies each year in the United States; and

5 Whereas, nearly half of all unintended pregnancies end in abortion and
6 abortion rates in the United States increase during times when contraception is less
7 accessible to low income women; and

8 Whereas, the United States has one of the highest rates of unintended
9 pregnancy among the world's developed nations—half of all pregnancies in the
10 United States are unintended, and half of unintended pregnancies occur in women
11 who are not using contraceptives; and

12 Whereas, in addition to the primary purpose of allowing women to plan and
13 prepare for pregnancy, other health benefits of contraception include reduced risk of
14 endometrial and ovarian cancers, ectopic pregnancy, iron deficiency anemia related
15 to heavy menstruation, osteoporosis, ovarian cysts, and pelvic inflammatory disease;
16 and

17 Whereas, racial and ethnic health disparities are particularly pronounced in
18 reproductive health—including disparities in rates of contraception usage,
19 unintended pregnancies, maternal mortality, and sexually transmitted
20 infections—and these disparities reveal significant barriers to access to sexual
21 health care (including contraception), medical care, and medically accurate
22 sexuality education; and

23 Whereas, a majority of American voters believe that matters related to women's
24 reproductive rights, including contraception and abortion, are personal issues that

1 should be decided by women with their families, health care providers, or clergy
2 members; now, therefore, be it

3 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That:*** the week of
4 January 22–28, 2012, be recognized as “reproductive rights awareness week,” to
5 encourage public awareness, conversation, and support for reproductive rights and
6 justice nationwide.

7 (END)