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**TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION MONTH DRAWS 60 MICHIGAN
YOUTH TO LANSING FOR Y.E.L.L. DAY
(Youth Educating Legislators in Lansing)**

***Effective pregnancy prevention policies needed to reduce the number of
unintended pregnancies, high rate of STDs among teens***

LANSING, MICHIGAN — With teen pregnancy on the rise for the first time in more than a decade, and one in four teen girls having a sexually transmitted infection, providing teens with effective prevention tools is more important than ever. That's why 60 Michigan youth converged in Lansing May 15 to lobby for policies that prevent unintended pregnancies and reduce the rate of sexually transmitted infections among teens.

The teens asked legislators for policies to include:

- Comprehensive sexuality education
- Awareness of and access to emergency contraception
- Access to affordable birth control

"One of the teens in my high school told me how she was completely unprepared to protect herself sexually because no one ever taught her about condoms or prevention," said Brie Prusak of Milan. "She never heard of emergency contraception either, which is really important because a lot of teens have unprotected sex their first time, since it frequently happens without any planning."

Many of the teens who came to Lansing are Teen Peer Educators for Planned Parenthood. They receive 40 hours of training on topics including anatomy and physiology, contraception, sexual decision-making, alcohol and drug use, dating violence, teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

"Teens want to know all the facts and understand all the consequences so they can make their own decisions about sexual activity," said Teen Peer Educator Katie Mercer of Ann Arbor.

Mercer and Prusak also testified at a committee hearing for House Bills 6048, 6049 and 6050. Kyndall McCoy of Benton Harbor and Raina LaGrand of Battle Creek, also Teen Peer Educators for Planned Parenthood, spoke at a press conference Thursday as part of the Teen Lobby Day.

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For over 90 years, Planned Parenthood has worked to make sure that all people have the information and means to decide freely and responsibly whether and when to have children.