

TITLE 42 - THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE
CHAPTER 6A - PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
SUBCHAPTER XVIII - ADOLESCENT FAMILY LIFE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

§ 300z. Findings and purposes

- (a) The Congress finds that—
- (1) in 1978, an estimated one million one hundred thousand teenagers became pregnant, more than five hundred thousand teenagers carried their babies to term, and over one-half of the babies born to such teenagers were born out of wedlock;
 - (2) adolescents aged seventeen and younger accounted for more than one-half of the out of wedlock births to teenagers;
 - (3) in a high proportion of cases, the pregnant adolescent is herself the product of an unmarried parenthood during adolescence and is continuing the pattern in her own lifestyle;
 - (4) it is estimated that approximately 80 per centum of unmarried teenagers who carry their pregnancies to term live with their families before and during their pregnancy and remain with their families after the birth of the child;
 - (5) pregnancy and childbirth among unmarried adolescents, particularly young adolescents, often results in severe adverse health, social, and economic consequences including: a higher percentage of pregnancy and childbirth complications; a higher incidence of low birth weight babies; a higher infant mortality and morbidity; a greater likelihood that an adolescent marriage will end in divorce; a decreased likelihood of completing schooling; and higher risks of unemployment and welfare dependency; and therefore, education, training, and job research services are important for adolescent parents;
 - (6)
 - (A) adoption is a positive option for unmarried pregnant adolescents who are unwilling or unable to care for their children since adoption is a means of providing permanent families for such children from available approved couples who are unable or have difficulty in conceiving or carrying children of their own to term; and
 - (B) at present, only 4 per centum of unmarried pregnant adolescents who carry their babies to term enter into an adoption plan or arrange for their babies to be cared for by relatives or friends;
 - (7) an unmarried adolescent who becomes pregnant once is likely to experience recurrent pregnancies and childbearing, with increased risks;
 - (8)
 - (A) the problems of adolescent premarital sexual relations, pregnancy, and parenthood are multiple and complex and are frequently associated with or are a cause of other troublesome situations in the family; and
 - (B) such problems are best approached through a variety of integrated and essential services provided to adolescents and their families by other family members, religious and charitable organizations, voluntary associations, and other groups in the private sector as well as services provided by publicly sponsored initiatives;
 - (9) a wide array of educational, health, and supportive services are not available to adolescents with such problems or to their families, or when available frequently are fragmented and thus are of limited effectiveness in discouraging adolescent premarital sexual relations and the consequences of such relations;
 - (10)
 - (A) prevention of adolescent sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy depends primarily upon developing strong family values and close family ties, and since the family is the basic social unit in which the values and attitudes of adolescents concerning sexuality and pregnancy are formed, programs designed to deal with issues of sexuality and pregnancy will

- be successful to the extent that such programs encourage and sustain the role of the family in dealing with adolescent sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy;
- (B)** Federal policy therefore should encourage the development of appropriate health, educational, and social services where such services are now lacking or inadequate, and the better coordination of existing services where they are available; and
- (C)** services encouraged by the Federal Government should promote the involvement of parents with their adolescent children, and should emphasize the provision of support by other family members, religious and charitable organizations, voluntary associations, and other groups in the private sector in order to help adolescents and their families deal with complex issues of adolescent premarital sexual relations and the consequences of such relations; and
- (11)** **(A)** there has been limited research concerning the societal causes and consequences of adolescent pregnancy;
- (B)** there is limited knowledge concerning which means of intervention are effective in mediating or eliminating adolescent premarital sexual relations and adolescent pregnancy; and
- (C)** it is necessary to expand and strengthen such knowledge in order to develop an array of approaches to solving the problems of adolescent premarital sexual relations and adolescent pregnancy in both urban and rural settings.
- (b)** Therefore, the purposes of this subchapter are—
- (1)** to find effective means, within the context of the family, of reaching adolescents before they become sexually active in order to maximize the guidance and support available to adolescents from parents and other family members, and to promote self discipline and other prudent approaches to the problem of adolescent premarital sexual relations, including adolescent pregnancy;
- (2)** to promote adoption as an alternative for adolescent parents;
- (3)** to establish innovative, comprehensive, and integrated approaches to the delivery of care services both for pregnant adolescents, with primary emphasis on unmarried adolescents who are seventeen years of age or under, and for adolescent parents, which shall be based upon an assessment of existing programs and, where appropriate, upon efforts to establish better coordination, integration, and linkages among such existing programs in order to—
- (A)** enable pregnant adolescents to obtain proper care and assist pregnant adolescents and adolescent parents to become productive independent contributors to family and community life; and
- (B)** assist families of adolescents to understand and resolve the societal causes which are associated with adolescent pregnancy;
- (4)** to encourage and support research projects and demonstration projects concerning the societal causes and consequences of adolescent premarital sexual relations, contraceptive use, pregnancy, and child rearing;
- (5)** to support evaluative research to identify effective services which alleviate, eliminate, or resolve any negative consequences of adolescent premarital sexual relations and adolescent childbearing for the parents, the child, and their families; and
- (6)** to encourage and provide for the dissemination of results, findings, and information from programs and research projects relating to adolescent premarital sexual relations, pregnancy, and parenthood.

(July 1, 1944, ch. 373, title XX, § 2001, as added Pub. L. 97–35, title IX, § 955(a), Aug. 13, 1981, 95 Stat. 578; amended Pub. L. 98–512, § 2(b), (c), Oct. 19, 1984, 98 Stat. 2409.)

NB: This unofficial compilation of the U.S. Code is current as of Jan. 5, 2009 (see <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/uscpri.html>).

Amendments

1984—Subsec. (a)(5). Pub. L. 98–512, § 2(b), struck out reference relating to developmental disabilities and inserted provision relating to importance of education, training, and job research services for adolescent parents.

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 98–512, § 2(c), inserted “both” before “for pregnant adolescents”.