

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 162

Expressing the sense of the Senate concerning *Griswold v. Connecticut*.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 7, 2005

Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. CORZINE, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. REID, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. JEFFORDS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate concerning *Griswold v. Connecticut*.

Whereas June 7, 2005, marks the 40th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) in which the Court recognized the constitutional right of married couples to use contraception—a right that the Court would extend to unmarried individuals within less than a decade;

Whereas the decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut* paved the way for widespread use of birth control among American women;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognized family planning in its published list of the “Ten Great Public Health Achievements in the 20th Century”;

Whereas the typical woman in the United States wants only 2 children and therefore spends roughly 30 years of her life trying to prevent pregnancy;

Whereas birth control is a critical component of basic preventive health care for women and has been the driving force in reducing national rates of unintended pregnancy and the need for abortion;

Whereas the ability of women to control their fertility and avoid unintended pregnancy has led to dramatic declines in maternal and infant mortality rates and has improved maternal and infant health;

Whereas in 1965, there were 31.6 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births and in 2000 there were 9.8 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births;

Whereas in 1965, 24.7 infants under 1 year of age died per 1,000 live births and in 2003 this figure had declined to 7 infant deaths per 1,000 live births;

Whereas the ability of women to control their fertility has enabled them to achieve personal educational and professional goals critical to the economic success of the United States;

Whereas in 1965, 7 percent of women completed 4 or more years of college compared to 26 percent in 2004;

Whereas in 1965, women age 16 and over constituted 39 percent of the workforce compared to 59 percent in 2004;

Whereas publicly-funded family planning programs have increased the ability of women, regardless of economic status, to access birth control and experience the resulting health and economic benefits;

Whereas public investment in this most basic preventive health care is extremely cost effective—for every dollar spent on publicly funded family planning, \$3 is saved in pregnancy-related and newborn care cost to the Medicaid program alone;

Whereas Congress had repeatedly recognized the importance of a women’s ability to access contraceptives through support for Medicaid, title X of the Public Health Service Act, and the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program;

Whereas 40 years after the Griswold decision, many women still face challenges in accessing birth control and using it effectively;

Whereas the United States has one of the highest rates of unintended pregnancy among Western nations and each year, half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended, and nearly half of those end in abortion;

Whereas teen pregnancy rates have dramatically declined, still, 78 percent of teen pregnancies are unintended and more than one-third of teen girls will become pregnant before age 20; and

Whereas publicly funded family planning clinics are the only source of healthcare for many uninsured and low-income women: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) forty years ago the United States Supreme

3 Court in *Griswold v. Connecticut* held that married

4 people have a constitutional right to use contracep-

5 tives, a right that the Court would extend to unmar-

6 ried individuals within less than a decade;

- 1 (2) the ability of women to control their fertility
2 through birth control has vastly improved maternal
3 and infant health, has reduced national rates of un-
4 intended pregnancy, and has allowed women the
5 ability to achieve personal educational and profes-
6 sional goals critical to the economic success of the
7 United States; and
- 8 (3) Congress should take further steps to en-
9 sure that all women have universal access to afford-
10 able contraception.

○