



05/20/10

Letter to the Editor:

The American Association of University Women of New Jersey (AAUW-NJ) supports public funding for comprehensive family planning programs, and opposes attempts to reduce their services through drastic public funding cuts.

These critical services give women and families access to reproductive health care and the information needed to plan the timing and spacing of pregnancies. New Jersey's family planning programs are often the primary health care services for the state's low income and working families. These family planning programs help women make informed decisions, which in turn help to reduce the incidence of maternal and infant mortality and improve the overall health of women and families. Family planning also fosters self-sufficiency, promotes preventative health care, provides cancer screening programs, and educates people on ways to protect themselves and their families from the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

Family planning increases women's educational opportunities and improves their economic options. A lack of access to family planning resources, which often results in early and frequent births, can impede a women's ability to access education. This has a domino effect, reducing her employment opportunities and thus her capacity to support herself and her family. Women who begin childbearing before age 20 are less likely to finish school than those who wait even a few years. The higher a woman's level of education, the more likely she is to postpone marriage and childbearing.

Family planning services reduce the incidence of abortion. The primary cause of abortion is unplanned pregnancy. Access to family planning counseling and contraception allows women to choose if and when to have children, therefore reducing the number of unintended pregnancies and the need for abortion. Although opponents of family planning claim that it promotes abortion, family planning funds are not used for abortion.

In conclusion, AAUW-NJ believes that comprehensive family planning programs are vital for New Jersey women and families. These programs provide women with much needed reproductive health care and information that enable them to plan the timing and spacing of births, therefore reducing the number of unintended pregnancies and increasing the overall health of women and children. AAUW-NJ opposes attempts to reduce these services through drastic public funding cuts.

Sincerely,

Sally Anne Goodson
President
AAUW-NJ
203 Whitford Avenue, Nutley, NJ 07110

AAUW-NJ

About AAUW

AAUW is a 501 (c)(3) charitable membership organization, with a nationwide network of nearly 100,000 members nationwide, 1,000 branches, and 500 college/university institution partners.

AAUW's Mission: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.

Since 1881, AAUW (formerly known as the American Association of University Women) has been the nation's leading voice promoting education and equity for women and girls.

For more than 128 years, AAUW members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day — educational, social, economic, and political. Our commitment to our mission is reflected in all aspects of our work:

- Public Policy Advocacy
- Voter Education Campaign
- Conventions and Conferences
- Community Programs
- Leadership Development
- International Connections

Contact us at: AAUW.org

New Jersey at: AAUWNJ.org