

CONSENT TO CONTRACEPTION FOR TEEN MOTHERS

Teen parents deserve our support when it comes to meeting their life goals – including tools needed to avoid a repeat unintended pregnancy.

With parenthood comes responsibility. A teen mother has a legal right to consent to all medical care for her child and make important health-related decisions. However, under Texas law, if she is under 18, she is **not allowed to consent** to her own contraception.

One of the strongest risk factors for a future teen pregnancy is a prior teen pregnancy. **Texas has one of the highest rates of repeat teen births in the nation.** In 2017, 19% of teen births in Texas were to girls who already had at least one child. While young parents can complete their education, form strong workforce attachments, and achieve their potential, it becomes harder with each additional unintended birth.

HB 938 and **SB 149** would empower teen mothers to consent to their own birth control, removing an important barrier to repeat pregnancy prevention. These bills could result in significant cost savings, as approximately 88% of births to adolescents are covered by Medicaid.

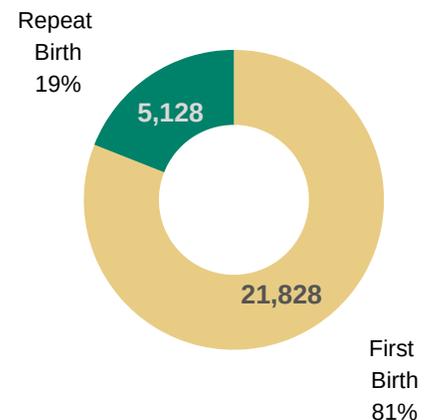
The Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, a statewide nonpartisan organization, aims to reduce teen pregnancy through research, advocacy, collaboration, and training. Our vision is that every Texas teen has access to the information and resources to prevent unintended pregnancy.

BILLS FILED

HB 938 by Rep. Sarah Davis

SB 149 by Sen. José Rodríguez

TEEN BIRTHS IN TEXAS, 2017



In 2017, of the nearly 27,000 births to Texas teens aged 15-19, 5,128 were repeat births. Additionally, 13% of births to 17 year olds were repeat births.

Source: CDC

HK'S STORY

When I got pregnant with my daughter at the age of 15 everything seemed like a dream come true. She was born healthy, us forming a happy family, but while we were still in the hospital I wanted to make sure of one thing – that I would be able to control the size of my family for the time being. I remember asking the obstetrician if I could get an IUD that day but I was told I would need a parent or guardian's signature. I went through every option I possibly could, concluding that birth control just wasn't an option for me. My mother was serving time in prison, my father was homeless and neither of them had signed me over to a legal guardian. I ended up accepting I had no way of getting birth control and decided I would wait until I was 18. Eight months later, I bought a pregnancy test and my heart sank when I got a positive result.