

# IN FREE FALL: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN AMERICA

POPULATION INSTITUTE'S ANNUAL REPORT CARD SHOWS SLIPPAGE: U.S. GRADE FALLS TO A "D"



## 1/21

**WASHINGTON** IS ONE OF 21 STATES RECEIVING A "B" OR HIGHER NATIONALLY, THE WORST MAY BE YET TO COME.

### **WASHINGTON RECEIVED AN "A", IN PART, BECAUSE:**

Washington requires HIV education with information on condoms in its sex education curriculum, and requires that it be medically accurate.

Washington offers Medicaid expansions to cover family planning services for people who otherwise do not qualify for Medicaid.

Washington mandates that emergency rooms provide information about emergency contraception and dispense it upon request.

Washington has no laws that make it unnecessarily difficult for a woman to have an abortion if she chooses to do so.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – In releasing its fifth annual *50-State Report Card on Reproductive Health and Rights*, the Population Institute lowered the U.S. grade from a "D+" to a "D". The report card, the most comprehensive report card of its kind, tracks multiple indicators of reproductive health and rights, including access to family planning and abortion services.

The Institute's president Robert Walker said, "For the past five years, reproductive health and rights in the U.S. have been on a slippery slope." Five years ago nine states received an "F". In this year's report card 20 states received a failing grade. Walker warned, however, "The worst may be yet to come, as Congress and the new Administration are expected to slash federal funding for family planning and comprehensive sex education. The slippery slope is becoming a free fall."

Walker emphasized that *"It's not just abortion rights that are under siege; it's also access to family planning services, and when women are denied access to contraception everyone loses: there are more unintended pregnancies, more abortions, and higher health care costs."*

This year's report card also draws attention to "a growing national divide" on reproductive health and rights, and Walker warned that Washington, while on the right side of the national divide, is still falling short in some areas, and those failures, in turn, can contribute to higher rates of unintended and unwanted pregnancies, including teen pregnancies.

### **WASHINGTON IS DOING BETTER THAN MOST STATES, BUT STILL HAS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT**

Walker noted that several factors accounted for Washington's grade including prevention and affordability.

Using eleven criteria, the Institute's report card ranked each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia on four broad indicators relating to reproductive health and rights: effectiveness, prevention, affordability, and access. Based

upon their composite scores (0-100), each state received a "core" grade (A, B, C, D or F), but some states received an additional "plus" or a "minus" for factors not reflected in the core grade.

### **WASHINGTON RECEIVED A "PLUS" BECAUSE THEY ENACTED A LAW ALLOWING PHARMACISTS TO PRESCRIBE AND DISPENSE CONTRACEPTIVES**

Only 21 states received a "B-" or higher. Just five states (California, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington) received an "A". The following states received a failing grade in 2016: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Walker warned that *"A woman's reproductive health should not depend on where she lives, but it does, as women in many areas are experiencing reduced access to reproductive health care services including abortion."* Walker noted that 19 states have refused to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, leaving tens of millions of women without improved access to contraception and other

health care services. Walker also noted that in 27 states today more than 50% of women now live in a county without an abortion provider.

Federal support for reproductive health and rights could suffer a major reversal in 2017. Congress and the new Administration are expected to curtail access to contraceptive services by blocking all funding for Planned Parenthood, defunding Title X, a 48-year old program that provides support to family planning clinics serving low-income households, and eliminating the Affordable Care Act's no-cost birth control mandate. Walker noted that *"In the past five years most of the slippage on reproductive health has occurred at the state level, but this year could see unprecedented setbacks at the national level, including cuts in funding for comprehensive sex education in the schools and a return to abstinence only programs which have been proven to be ineffective."*

Walker stressed that this year's report card should be "an urgent call to action" for anyone who is concerned about reproductive health and rights. *"As disappointing as 2016 was, 2017 could be a whole lot worse."*

# A+

## WASHINGTON

# 87.4/100

## BREAKDOWN OF SCORES

### EFFECTIVENESS

#### Teen Pregnancy Rate **10.7/15**

Washington has a teen pregnancy rate of 47 pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-19. We set 30 pregnancies per 1,000 teen women by 2020 as the goal, which indicates that Washington has achieved 71.6% of the objective.

#### Unintended Pregnancy Rate **13.6/15**

48% of Washington's total pregnancies are unintended, compared to the Healthy People 2020 objective of 44%. Thus, Washington has achieved 90.9% of the target rate.

### PREVENTION

#### Sex Education **8/15**

Washington requires HIV education with information on condoms in its sex education curriculum, and requires that it be medically accurate.

#### Access to Emergency Contraception **5/5**

Washington mandates that emergency rooms provide information about emergency contraception and dispense it upon request.

#### Minors Access to Contraception **5/5**

Washington explicitly allows all minors to consent to contraceptive services.

### AFFORDABILITY

#### Medicaid Expansion **15/15**

Washington has expanded their Medicaid program under the Affordable Care Act.

#### Medicaid Family Planning Expansions **5/5**

Washington offers Medicaid expansions to cover family planning services for people who otherwise do not qualify for Medicaid. The expansion, in the form of a waiver, is offered to people with income levels up to 250% of the federal poverty line. The family planning expansion is also extended to include men as well as individuals under the age of 19.

#### Insurance Coverage of Abortion **5/5**

Washington does not restrict coverage of abortion in private insurance plans.

### ACCESS

#### Abortion Restrictions **10/10**

Washington has no laws that make it unnecessarily difficult for a woman to have an abortion if she chooses to do so.

#### TRAP Laws **5/5**

Washington has not enacted TRAP Laws which are targeted regulation of abortion providers beyond what is necessary to ensure patient safety.

#### Abortion Access **5/5**

13% of women in Washington live in a county without an abortion provider.

For the complete report card and additional information, please visit: [www.populationinstitute.org/reportcard](http://www.populationinstitute.org/reportcard)



POPULATION INSTITUTE

A special thanks to the **Guttmacher Institute** whose research made this report card possible.