

NO on Prop. **85** *for* REAL TEEN SAFETY

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MULTICULTURAL LEADERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST PROPOSITION 85

Dangerous Initiative Puts Teens at Risk
Leaders Urge Diverse California Communities to Vote NO on 85 on Nov. 7th

LOS ANGELES— Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina, Assemblymember Judy Chu and Assemblymember Cindy Montañez, joined by a diverse coalition of multicultural and faith leaders representing California's communities of color, joined forces today to denounce Proposition 85 as a dangerous and misguided measure that will place teens in grave danger. These leaders urged California voters to consider the consequences to California's most vulnerable teens in **all** of the state's communities and vote NO on Proposition 85 on November 7th.

Most parents want what's best for their daughters and good family communication. In most families, that's the case. Proposition 85 would endanger teens who can't talk to their parents because of violence or abuse. It would force them to take matters into their own hands when faced with a pregnancy, without counseling or support from family members or other trusted adults. That's why Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and other trusted community leaders, along with doctors, nurses and teachers say NO to Proposition 85 – because they understand the real danger that it represents for our daughters.

"If teenage pregnancy is the problem, then Proposition 85 is not the answer. Prop. 85 does not address the issue of why our teens are becoming pregnant in the first place; nor does it protect scared teens who live in abusive or violent family environments," said Crystal Crawford, Chief Executive Officer of California Black Women's Health Project. "When faced with a pregnancy without access to confidential health services, many desperate teens may take matters into their own hands and use dangerous methods to terminate a pregnancy. Prevention and comprehensive sexual education (including abstinence) is the answer; not Prop. 85."

"While the public perception may be that teen pregnancy is not a problem in the Asian and Pacific Islander community, certain ethnic subgroups have disproportionately high rates of teen pregnancy. If youth do not feel comfortable notifying their parents about having an abortion, which would be constitutionally mandated under Prop 85, they may take other measures that could threaten their health," added Veronika Geronimo, Project Director with the Asian Pacific American Legal Center. "The best way to help parents -- especially immigrant parents -- is to provide them with family support services not government mandates like Proposition 85."

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“Latina/o families already face great barriers and have the least access to basic health services. Clearly, Latina/o families need more access to health care and information, not less. Proposition 85 could force the most vulnerable Latina teens to take matters into their own hands instead of getting the professional counseling and medical care they need,” said Rocio Córdoba, Executive Director of California Latinas for Reproductive Justice. “In our work with Latina/o parents, it is clear that they want and need real solutions to promote their health and safety. Latina/o families need information about reproductive health and better tools to share this information with their children honestly and openly. Proposition 85 does nothing to provide real support to our community. Instead, it places young Latinas in danger”

“We believe that youth should discuss issues related to sex, pregnancy, and abortion with their parents, but the reality is not all youths are able to talk to them. Many Southeast Asian teens do not talk about sex at home and cannot talk to their parents because of shame, embarrassment, abuse, or fear of getting kicked out of their home,” said Suely Ngouy, Executive Director of Khmer Girls in Action. “Proposition 85 is an attack targeted at young people, specifically low-income, immigrant, youth of colors’ right to make healthy decisions for themselves. Without access to confidential and professional health care, minors are more likely to delay seeking services, turn to illegal abortions, or even attempt to perform abortions on themselves. KGA stands firmly united with our allies to urge the multicultural communities to vote No on Proposition 85 to keep our teens safe.”

“Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers’ lives, but in the real world, good family communication cannot be imposed by government,” said ACLU/SC Executive Director Ramona Ripston. “A drastic one-size-fits-all constitutional amendment would force government into our most sensitive family decisions and puts our state’s most vulnerable teens – those who live in dangerous, abusive or violent homes – in real danger. That is the reason why this very diverse group of community leaders and organizations has gathered here today to show the tremendous opposition to Prop. 85. California voters must reject Prop. 85 on November 7th.”

“The fact is that Prop. 85 does nothing to help the over 70% of teens who already involve their parents -- but it puts the vulnerable teens from violent or abusive homes in real danger. That’s why every major medical association that evaluated Prop 85 is asking for a NO vote,” said Mary-Jane Waglé, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Los Angeles. “Make no mistake: the backers of 85 have a political agenda to oppose sex education in schools, block access to contraception and outlaw all abortion -- even in cases of rape and incest.”

The Multicultural Leaders Press Briefing was co-sponsored by a diverse coalition of organizations urging voters to vote NO on Proposition 85 on November 7th, including: ACLU of Southern California, Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, Black Women for Wellness, California Black Women's Health Project, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, California Women's Law Center, Dolores Huerta Foundation, Khmer Girls in Action, Los Angeles Reproductive Justice Coalition, Planned Parenthood Los Angeles, with other multicultural community leaders and community-based organizations.

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