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THE PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS ACCESS TO EDUCATION ACT

Every year in America, approximately 400,000 teenage girls give birth. With each pregnancy, the new mother becomes increasingly at risk of dropping out of school—and their child is more likely to become a dropout as well. Only half of teen mothers achieve a high school diploma by age 22, compared to 89 percent of their childless peers.

In a nationwide survey of dropout youth, close to half of all female dropouts and one-third of male dropouts said that becoming a parent played a role in their decision to leave school. This dropout crisis has severe short- and long-term consequences for the economic success and well-being of their families and communities, as well as our nation.

To address this crisis, the **Pregnant and Parenting Students Access to Education Act** would:

- Enable states to create a plan for pregnant and parenting students, provide professional development and technical assistance to school districts, coordinate services with other state agencies, and disseminate information, among other activities.
- Establish a state coordinator and school district liaisons for the education of pregnant and parenting students.
- Require school district grantees to provide academic support services, parenting and life skills for pregnant and parenting students; assist students in gaining access to affordable child care, early childhood education, and transportation services; engage in student outreach, recruitment and retention; provide professional development for school personnel; and revise school policies and practices to remove barriers and encourage pregnant and parenting students to continue their education.
- Allow districts to provide case management services; pregnancy prevention interventions; referrals to primary health care, family planning, mental health, substance abuse, housing assistance, legal aid, mentoring, or other supportive services needed by students; and to address school climate issues, including illegal discrimination against and stigmatization of pregnant and parenting students.
- Collect and report data on pregnant and parenting students annually, including educational outcomes, and require a rigorous evaluation of the program.

The bill would authorize \$100 million in FY 2012 and such sums as necessary for FY 2013-2016.