



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Joins Coalition of Attorneys General Supporting Evidence-Based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program *HHS's Funding Opportunity Announcements Undermine States' Efforts to Reduce Teen Pregnancy by Shifting Focus to Abstinence-Only Programs*

BALTIMORE, MD (March 20, 2019) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today joined a coalition of 21 attorneys general filing an [amicus brief](#) supporting Planned Parenthood in their legal challenge against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) change to the funding structure of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) grant program.

The case, *Planned Parenthood v. HHS*, is one of three lawsuits challenging two Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) issued by HHS in 2018 for the TPP program, which Congress created to fund evidence-based programs proven effective in reducing teen pregnancy. The 2018 FOAs changed the requirements for the program by shifting the focus to abstinence-only education, rather than evidence-based programs shown to be effective.

“Undermining the Teen Pregnancy Prevention program by shifting grant funding from objective, scientifically sound programs to ideological ones is bad policy,” said Attorney General Frosh. “This move will put Maryland’s youth at risk for unintended pregnancies, jeopardizing their health and well-being, and increasing health care costs across the state.”

Since its creation in 2009, the TPP program has provided nearly \$1 billion for state, local, and community programs that have been proven to reduce rates of teenage pregnancy. Those programs reached half a million teens from 2010-2014, and are anticipated to have reached 1.2 million more from 2015-2019. The program puts an intentional focus on communities with the greatest need and most vulnerable youth, including those of color, in foster care, or in rural areas. The TPP program is an indispensable component of Maryland’s efforts to reduce the physical and medical risks of teenage pregnancy, as well as associated emotional, social, and financial costs.

The attorneys general argue that the 2018 FOAs threaten to frustrate the design of the TPP program and undermine states’ efforts to reduce teen pregnancy. The FOAs would shift the focus of the grant process to rewarding programs that promote a particular “abstinence-only” ideology, rather than following Congress’ mandate to fund programs that are medically accurate and have been proven to work through rigorous evaluation.

If the FOAs are allowed to stand, federal funds will be directed to less-effective or medically inaccurate programs, while other programs that have been proven to work will languish. As a result, more teens will be at risk of becoming pregnant, imposing significant additional costs on Maryland residents.

In two similar cases, *Planned Parenthood of NYC v. HHS* and *Multnomah County v. Azar*, the District Court found that HHS had acted unlawfully and vacated or enjoined one of the FOAs. However, the district court dismissed the case at hand for lack of standing. Planned Parenthood appealed to the Ninth Circuit to reverse the District Court's decision and to direct the District Court to enter summary judgment in favor of Plaintiffs. The Attorneys General filed this amicus brief in support of that request.

The coalition was led by Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro. In addition to Maryland, the amicus brief was signed by the Attorneys General of California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.