

ASSEMBLY, No. 2312

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 16, 1996

By Assemblywomen WEINBERG, VANDERVALK, Assemblyman Zisa, Assemblywoman Buono, Assemblyman Barnes, Assemblywoman Allen, Assemblymen DeSopo, Greenwald, Roberts, Assemblywoman Friscia, Assemblyman Felice, Assemblywomen Quigley, Cruz-Perez and Turner

1 AN ACT establishing an Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy,  
2 supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statutes and making an  
3 appropriation.

4  
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6 *of New Jersey:*

- 7  
8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:  
9 a. Out-of-wedlock adolescent births are a serious problem facing  
10 the State of New Jersey and the nation;  
11 b. A large number of adolescents ages 10-19 are having children  
12 with approximately one million adolescents in the United States  
13 becoming pregnant each year;  
14 c. Adolescent pregnancy has serious medical consequences,  
15 including the following: adolescents are less likely than older mothers  
16 to obtain prenatal care as only half of the pregnant adolescents in New  
17 Jersey receive early prenatal care; pregnant teenagers are at excess risk  
18 for anemia, cervical trauma, premature delivery, prolonged or abrupt  
19 labor and maternal mortality; and children of adolescent mothers are  
20 more likely to have low birth weight, require further hospitalization  
21 and die in infancy;  
22 d. Out-of-wedlock adolescent pregnancy has serious social  
23 consequences, including the following: adolescent mothers are more  
24 likely to live in poverty, receive public assistance, be a high school  
25 dropout and be unemployed as nearly 75% of all single mothers under  
26 age 25 live in poverty, approximately half of all women receiving  
27 AFDC from 1976-1992 were or had been teenage mothers, only  
28 slightly more than half of adolescents who become mothers finish high  
29 school and children of adolescent mothers experience excess rates of  
30 dropping out of school, incarceration, depression, premature sexual  
31 activity and out-of-wedlock births. As of 1992, 84% of all births to  
32 mothers under the age of 20 in New Jersey were out-of-wedlock, the  
33 sixth highest rate in the country;

- 1 e. Out-of-wedlock adolescent pregnancy imposes large economic  
2 costs to federal, state and local governments;
- 3 f. There is a need for a permanent body to confront the issue of  
4 out-of-wedlock adolescent pregnancy and to review policy proposals,  
5 such as the findings and recommendations presented in the 1988 report  
6 of the New Jersey Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy; and
- 7 g. It is therefore necessary to establish an advisory council to  
8 determine the best methods of coordination and improvement of the  
9 services of State and local governmental, private and voluntary  
10 agencies, community organizations, and schools which seek to serve  
11 adolescents at high risk of pregnancy, pregnant adolescents, adolescent  
12 parents, and their families.
- 13
- 14 2. a. There is established in the Executive Branch of the State  
15 Government an Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy. For the  
16 purposes of complying with the provisions of Article V, Section IV,  
17 paragraph 1 of the New Jersey Constitution, the advisory council is  
18 allocated within the Department of Health and Senior Services, but  
19 notwithstanding that allocation, the advisory council shall be  
20 independent of any supervision or control by the department or by any  
21 board or officer thereof.
- 22 b. The advisory council shall consist of 23 members as follows: the  
23 Commissioners of the Departments of Health and Senior Services,  
24 Human Services, Education, Community Affairs, and Labor, who shall  
25 serve as ex officio members, and 18 public members, four of whom  
26 shall be teenagers, including two teenage parents and two teenagers  
27 who are not parents, and fourteen of whom shall be representatives of  
28 community based religious, health and social service organizations  
29 which serve adolescents and health professionals and educators with  
30 recognized expertise in the field of adolescent pregnancy. Of the  
31 public members, three shall be appointed by the President of the  
32 Senate, no more than two of whom shall be of the same political party;  
33 three shall be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, no  
34 more than two of whom shall be of the same political party; and 12  
35 shall be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the  
36 Senate, no more than six of whom shall be of the same political party.  
37 The advisory council shall organize within 30 days after the  
38 appointment of its members. The members shall select one person  
39 from among them to serve as the chairperson and the members shall  
40 select a secretary, who need not be a member of the advisory council.
- 41 c. Each ex officio member may designate an employee of the  
42 member's department to represent the member at hearings of the  
43 advisory council. All designees may lawfully vote and otherwise act  
44 on behalf of the member for whom they constitute the designee.
- 45 d. Each public member shall be appointed for a term of three years,  
46 but of the members first appointed, six shall serve for a term of one

1 year, six for a term of two years and six for a term of three years.  
2 Members shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified.  
3 Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original  
4 appointments were made.

5 e. Members of the advisory council shall serve without  
6 compensation but, within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise  
7 made available to it, shall be eligible for reimbursement of necessary  
8 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

9 f. The Department of Health and Senior Services shall provide such  
10 staff as the advisory council requests to carry out the purposes of this  
11 act.

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13 3. It shall be the duty of the advisory council to:

14 a. Review past policy proposals, including those contained in the  
15 1988 report of the New Jersey Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy;

16 b. Develop policy proposals for the State to prevent adolescent  
17 pregnancy, reduce out-of-wedlock births among adolescents and  
18 improve services to at-risk, pregnant, and parenting adolescents;

19 c. Assist with and promote a coordinated and comprehensive  
20 approach to the social, economic, and health problems of adolescent  
21 pregnancy and parenthood among public and private groups;

22 d. Collect information on ongoing and new efforts aimed at  
23 preventing adolescent pregnancy and improving services to at-risk,  
24 pregnant, and parenting adolescents;

25 e. Promote and encourage broad community input, communication  
26 and education regarding adolescent pregnancy;

27 f. Provide advice to local public and private agencies and schools  
28 seeking to mobilize local efforts designed to prevent adolescent  
29 pregnancies and assist adolescent parents; and

30 g. Coordinate activities generated by the National Campaign to  
31 Prevent Teen Pregnancy and the Family Planning Program in the State  
32 Department of Health and Senior Services.

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34 4. The advisory council may call to its assistance and avail itself of  
35 the services of the Legislature and officials and employees of any  
36 State, county or municipal department, board, bureau, commission,  
37 task force, or agency as may be required and made available for its  
38 purposes. It may also, within the limits of funds appropriated or  
39 otherwise made available to it, incur travel and miscellaneous expenses  
40 necessary for the performance of its duties.

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42 5. The advisory council shall report to the Governor and the  
43 Legislature biannually, or more frequently if deemed appropriate, on  
44 its activities, findings and recommendations for legislation,  
45 administrative action or other methods for preventing adolescent  
46 pregnancy, reducing out-of-wedlock births among adolescents and

1 improving services related to adolescent pregnancy.

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3 6. There is appropriated \$95,000 from the General Fund to the  
4 Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy to effectuate the purposes  
5 of this act.

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7 7. This act shall take effect immediately.

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## 10 STATEMENT

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12 This bill establishes a permanent Advisory Council on Adolescent  
13 Pregnancy in, but not of, the Department of Health and Senior  
14 Services. The advisory council would consist of 23 members including  
15 the Commissioners of the Departments of Health and Senior Services,  
16 Human Services, Education, Community Affairs, and Labor, ex officio,  
17 or their designees, and 18 public members including four teenagers and  
18 14 members representing community based religious, health and social  
19 service organizations which serve adolescents as well as health  
20 professionals and educators. Of the 18 public members, three are to  
21 be appointed by the President of the Senate, three by the Speaker of  
22 the Assembly and 12 by the Governor. The public members would  
23 serve a term of three years.

24 The advisory council would have the following duties: (1) to  
25 review past policy proposals; (2) to develop policy proposals to  
26 prevent adolescent pregnancy, reduce out-of-wedlock births and  
27 improve services to at-risk, pregnant, and parenting adolescents; (3)  
28 to assist with and promote a coordinated and comprehensive approach  
29 to the social, economic, and health problems of adolescent pregnancy  
30 and parenthood; (4) to collect information on ongoing and new efforts  
31 aimed at preventing adolescent pregnancy and improving services to  
32 adolescent parents; (5) to promote and encourage community input,  
33 communication and education regarding adolescent pregnancy; (6) to  
34 provide advice to local agencies and schools seeking to prevent  
35 adolescent pregnancies and assist adolescent parents; and (7) to  
36 coordinate activities generated by the National Campaign to Prevent  
37 Teen Pregnancy and the Family Planning Program in the State  
38 Department of Health and Senior Services.

39 The advisory council would report on its activities, findings and  
40 recommendations biannually, or more frequently if appropriate, to the  
41 Governor and the Legislature.

42 The bill also appropriates \$95,000 to the advisory council to carry  
43 out the purposes of this act.

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3 Establishes Advisory Council on Adolescent Pregnancy; appropriates

4 \$95,000.