

particularly, inappropriate intimacy stunts their growth.

Teenagers, by their nature, spend their teen years weaning themselves from their parents. That is what growing up is all about. It is about gaining your independence, gaining a sense of yourself, developing your own skills so that you can be your own person in the decades ahead.

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As one weans oneself from the control of one's parents, one also must gain that control oneself. For young women particularly, premature sexuality has the effect of transferring control to the young man. It is simply more true for young girls than it is for a young man. Yet, we do not talk with our girls about this at all.

We do not help them to see that, if they want to succeed in the project of growing up, if they want to be their own person, if they want to be intellectually strong, they want to be morally strong, they want to have a sound body, a sound mind, a sound heart, they have to take responsibility for themselves.

In seeking to leave their parents, it is particularly dangerous for young girls to shift that power of control through sexual intimacy to a young man. That is unfortunately exactly what happens, and we do not even talk about it.

So it is important to talk to one's teens. It is important to listen to the pressures they face. It is important not to be afraid of those pressures because, through discussion, one will arm one's child with an understanding of the power that abstinence provides them over themselves and gives them in shaping their future.

Now, growing up has always been tough. It is tough all through one's life to really grow up well. But it is particularly tough in teen years and during that process of adolescence. If we, as parents, cannot talk straighter with our children and cannot listen at a level that allows us to listen to things we never thought we would hear our kids say, then we cannot, with them, help them guide themselves through the difficult waters of adolescence in today's world and the many pressures that growing up imposes on teenagers.

So kids need to talk to their folks and folks need to listen to their children. We hope that, by investing money in the research necessary to better understand teen sexuality and teen growth, we will be better able to help kids understand how it is that one becomes empowered to be oneself and to determine one's own course and how it is we establish healthy, strong, loving relationships throughout one's lifetime. By investing money in this very important research project, we will be able to talk from an increasingly sound and strong basis of knowledge ourselves.

But we also hope that, through sheer publicity, we will be able to help teens

understand that premature sexual intimacy is destructive of their future.

I am delighted to be here with the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) today.

#### PARENTS' ROLE IN TEEN PREGNANCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I am also delighted to join the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) as we serve on the House Caucus for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy. I am delighted for many year reasons; one, because this is an opportunity, and the month of May is an opportunity to raise the awareness.

Over the last several years, I have spoken out often and devoted a lot of time and energy to this effort. But no more time is more rewarding than talking to young people themselves and talking to community leaders about this issue.

This week alone, I spoke to three different schools. It included a high school and two junior high schools. What I am finding out is that young people themselves have views, opinions, and they are part of a leadership, too. They should be engaged in this issue.

I am convinced if one is effectively to reduce teenage pregnancy, we must, indeed, bring the awareness to the community of the consequences of teenage pregnancies, not only to the families, the young people themselves, but also to the community. But more importantly, we must, indeed, engage our youth, because they are factored in resolving this issue.

We have good news. Since 1990, teenage pregnancies have gone down. It has been a steady decline. So we should celebrate that as a Nation. We deserve to be proud of that activity. But in spite of our good efforts and success, still, yet today, more than 1 million children, young people, indeed, become pregnant each year, those younger than the age of 20. Nearly 1 million every year now, although it is going down, there is a steady number of persons, indeed, who are teenagers who are becoming parents before they reach their 20th birthday.

Also, in my part of the State, eastern North Carolina, the rate is not going down as fast. In fact, I have several of my counties where the rate is higher than in my State. So I am, indeed, concerned about that.

May, as I say, is an opportunity where we can bring the awareness to both the community and to the young people. The thing we want to emphasize to our young people that teenage is a time when they should be concentrating on education. They should be having fun. They should be talking

about their career. They should be growing up and not focused on pregnancy or being a parent prematurely.

Mr. Speaker, I was happy to join the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) recently when the National Campaign to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy released their report. As the gentlewoman has already commented, that report emphasizes several things, both around parents and teenagers; and that teenagers really wanted to talk to their parents.

Sometimes parents thought teenagers wanted to talk to teenagers and were getting all the information from them. But they really thought they should get that information from the parents. Both parents and teenagers agree more often than one would think. Ninety-five percent of parents felt that abstinence was absolutely what should happen. Ninety-three percent of the teenagers thought, now one would not have thought that, but 93 percent of the teenagers themselves thought abstinence should be.

Both those same groups also felt that, but a lesser degree in terms of the parents, that, indeed, contraception should be a part of the story, and that they were not necessarily in conflict with each other; that abstinence should be emphasized; and, indeed, that contraception information about that should be a part of that as well.

Also, there was consensus about the role of the school. Both parents and teenagers felt that the primary role of the school was not necessarily to teach the values or the appropriateness, but there was a role for the schools, and that the school should be engaged in that process; that the primary responsibility should be the parent. If both parents and teenagers believe that, something must be missing in this game. It means that parents and teenagers are not talking to each other.

Now, many of the parents, as I said earlier, on one hand believe that contraception information and abstinence may give a dual message that may be in conflict. But the teenagers did not believe that. They did not see it. They felt that abstinence, indeed, the 93 percent believed it; but also a vast majority of those teenagers also felt the information about contraception was very, very important.

In fact, I personally believe that abstinence is the most important. But I also know that young people are very active sexually. So we must be engaged in providing the critical important information to teenagers so they can make the decision. I believe if we empower young people, they will make the difference.

Over the last several years, I have spoken out often and devoted a lot of time and energy to teen pregnancy prevention. My most meaningful efforts have involved a host of meetings and discussions with youth and community leaders where the focus has been on prevention and development activities in my congressional district. This week, I visited three different schools including a senior high school and two middle schools.

I am convinced that if we are to effectively reduce teenage childbearing, we must do more to raise the awareness level of this issue in our communities and actively engage our youth. Our youth have ideas, opinions and can provide leadership in our efforts to reduce teenage pregnancy.

Since the early 1990s, teen pregnancy and birth rates have steadily declined. As a nation, we deserve to be proud of the progress we have made. Yet, despite these impressive gains, 4 out of 10 girls in this country still get pregnant at least once by age 20—nearly 1 million adolescent pregnancies each year. Also, in eastern North Carolina, the rate has not gone down at the same time as the Nation, several counties in my district are among the highest in the State. In other words, we have a long way to go.

May is Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month. This is the most opportune time for all of us to redouble our efforts in convincing young people that adolescence must be a time for continued positive growth in the areas of education. It is the growing up and having fun stage for youth, not the time to dwell on pregnancy and parenthood. I was happy to recently help the private, nonprofit National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy release two new important reports (including a large nationally representative survey of adults and teens) that should provide comfort to parents and schools while challenging.

First, and perhaps most importantly, the survey released by the National Campaign clearly shows that the American public has a very common sense view of the teen pregnancy problem despite the often-extreme rhetoric that surrounds the issue. The overwhelming majority of adults and teens believe that teens should not be sexually active but those who are should have access to contraception. The survey also reveals, however, that the public does not view abstinence and contraceptive use as equally attractive options. A clear national consensus exists that school-age teens should not have sex—more than nine of ten adults (95 percent) and teens (93 percent) said it is important that teens be given a strong abstinence message from society.

The consensus position seems to recognize that the continued debate over abstinence versus contraception is counter-productive and misses the more critical issue of motivation. Teens will do neither unless they are highly motivated to avoid pregnancy in the first place.

Parents who feel that they have lost their children to the influence of peers and popular culture should note that teens say their parents influence their sexual decisionmaking more than any other source. Parents, on the other hand, believe that peers wield the greatest influence on these matters. This generational divide must be bridged. Parents need to know that their children really do want to hear from them about sex, love, and relationships, even if they don't always seem like it.

Schools are also clearly part of the solution to teen pregnancy. When asked where they have learned the most about preventing teen pregnancy, more teens said teachers and sex educators than other sources. Once again, however, both adults and teens take a common sense view of how much of the sex education burden schools should shoulder. Nine out of ten adults disagree that sex education is primarily the responsibility of schools and

few adults or teens believe that schools are responsible for fixing the problem of teen pregnancy.

So what should be done? What do these findings and others from the National Campaign suggest? Here are some simple recommendations for continued progress in preventing teen pregnancy:

Abstinence should be strongly stressed as the best choice for teens because of its effectiveness and its consistency with the beliefs of adults and teens. But giving teens information about—and access to—contraception is still important.

Arguments over which strategy is better—sexual abstinence or contraceptive use—are recipes for stalemate. More of both are needed. In a diverse country, a number of difference approaches to preventing teen pregnancy is absolutely essential.

Parents can do much more to help. Kids want to hear from their parents about sex and values but often do not.

Effective programs to reduce teen pregnancy should be expanded, but it is unrealistic to assume that community programs alone will solve this problem.

The good news about declining rates of teen pregnancy and birth is that progress on this seemingly intractable social problem is possible.

I was delighted by the comments and suggestions made by youth during my recent visit to neighborhood schools. Youth are concerned about the lack of productive after school activities. Youth leaders would like to become more active in prevention activities with other youth, and would like to know that contraceptives are provided hassle free.

I believe that devoting more energy resources and funding to prevention teen pregnancy would not only improve the health, education, and economic opportunities of our Nation's youth, but it would save money in the long run.

We cannot overestimate the far-reaching effects of teen pregnancy. We must continue to pursue ways to develop pregnancy prevention programs that educate and support high-risk youth and their families through comprehensive social and health services.

Young people who believe that they have real futures to risk, have real incentives to delay parenting. That is why when we demand responsible behavior we have reciprocal obligation to offer a real future beyond early parenting and poverty.

I strongly support abstinence education and feel that abstinence programs are critically important for pre-teens as well as teens; we, however, cannot ignore the fact that so many of our teens are already sexually active. Therefore it is important that teens hear both messages, abstinence and contraception. Good, factual information is empowering to our youth, especially with guidance from their parents. I encourage each community to help determine how best to address this critical issue.

#### TRIBUTE TO GLADYS HARRINGTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to

what I consider a great American lady, a woman who has witnessed firsthand World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the invention of television, the microwave, and the World Wide Web.

On May 29, Gladys Harrington, who is a real friend of mine, a true pillar of the Plano, Texas community, is celebrating her 100th birthday.

She has lived an abundant life. She moved to Plano in the early 1900s when 1,500 people lived there. Today, Plano is home to 230,000 plus and growing.

She married Fred Harrington in 1919 in Plano, Texas and gave birth to two sons, Joe Harrington and Conner Harrington. Conner Harrington actually ran for Congress against a Democrat icon, Sam Rayburn, who was a friend of mine as well. She is the proud grandma of four children, Connie, Cynthia, Mary Lou, and Freddy, as well as two great grandchildren, Sage and Emily.

It is obvious that she has touched the lives of those around her and blessed everyone with her passion for life and zest for service. As a member of the First Christian Church, she taught Sunday school, led the Christian Women Fellowship and served as a deaconess.

In addition, they helped found what is now the Gladys Harrington Library in Plano. What started as a one-room temporary facility has now blossomed into one of the leading libraries in the area.

Mr. Speaker, I may not even be standing here today were it not for the hard work and selfless dedication of my dear friend Gladys. I say that because Gladys helped me run my first campaign for Congress in 1991 and every time thereafter.

Every Republican knows that one cannot do anything Republican in Texas without Gladys Harrington. She has volunteered countless hours of her time and dollars to help the party rise to the best that it is today. Think about it. Every Statewide office in Texas is now Republican. The Texan in the White House is even a Republican, too; and Gladys helped him as well.

Gladys helped lay the essential groundwork for the grassroots efforts for this amazing fete. She has mobilized ground troops, attended conventions, paid her dues and then some.

In addition to giving her time to the Republican Party, she gives so much to those around her. In fact, she continues to go to a book club and to the Plano Chamber Orchestra. She keeps scrapbooking, detailing the many years behind her and saving room for more to come.

I think America needs more good people like Gladys Harrington. She is a great American in my view, and I am proud to know her. I just want to wish Gladys a happy birthday. Plano would not be the same without Gladys.