



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Statement: City's Teen Pregnancy Ad Campaign "Pathologically Mean-Spirited"

LIZ KRUEGER March 8, 2013

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Senator Krueger issued the following statement on the City Human Resources Administration's new ad campaign on teen pregnancy:

As someone who has spent decades in the fight against poverty and the fight to make sure women have equal rights to have or not have children, I am appalled at the ill-targeted and pathologically mean-spirited ad campaign put forward by the New York City Human Resources Administration, supposedly intended to reduce teen pregnancy.

This campaign seems laser-focused on shaming already-struggling teen parents or, ludicrously, convincing teens not to get pregnant because really bad things will happen -- sort of a failed abstinence-only sex-ed curriculum on steroids. At best, this is the wrong message for the wrong audience -- at worst, this could actually lead to more abandoned children.

Consider the messaging (coming from the mouths of babies) in these ads:

- *"Honestly mom, chances are he won't stay with you."*
- *"Dad, you'll be paying to support me for the next 20 years."*
- *"I'm twice as likely not to graduate high school because you had me as a teen."*

This campaign also misses a fundamental reality about teen pregnancy: it's a symptom of larger problems. Impoverished communities, a lack of support for teenagers, and continuing stigmatization of age-appropriate sex education all create an environment with more teen pregnancies. Spending money on a 'scared straight' campaign would be a distraction even if the ads weren't so fatally stupid in their design and message.

Mayor Bloomberg's administration has had a strong track record on reproductive health issues. They should stop spending money on this wrongheaded effort and do what the research shows is effective: implement, improve, and expand age-appropriate comprehensive sex education, and work harder to fight poverty in high-risk communities.

More Background:

- [NYC HRA Ad Campaign](#) -- "Think Being a Teen Parent Won't Cost You?"
- [RH Reality Check](#) -- "NYC Teen Pregnancy Campaign Brings Shaming to Bus Shelters and Cell Phones"