

Testimony Before the US Food and Drug Administration Reproductive Health
Drugs Advisory Committee
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My name is Dr. Beth Jordan. I am the Medical Director of the Feminist Majority Foundation, a leading feminist think tank, grassroots organization and publisher of Ms. magazine. With the largest pro-choice student activist network in the U.S., the Feminist Majority is committed to working with students and providers to maximize access to emergency contraception on the nation's campuses.

Other speakers are to discuss EC's safety and efficacy in reducing unintended pregnancy and the abortion rate. I can uniquely inform you of the situation for women on campuses by discussing results of a recent social science study conducted by the Feminist Majority Foundation documenting the lack of availability and inaccessibility of EC.

College age women are at particular risk for engaging in unprotected intercourse, experiencing contraceptive failure, and being sexually assaulted. To be maximally effective, EC must be taken within 24 hours. Barriers to timely access place unnecessary and unacceptable burdens upon students.

In 2002, the Feminist Majority Foundation conducted a comprehensive, nationwide, random sample survey of EC access on campus health clinics. The survey found that only 61% provide EC or prescriptions of EC and only 16% have weekend hours.

Anti-reproductive rights politics is an obstacle threatening access to EC on campuses. Anti-abortion legislators and activists who willfully or naively conflate contraception with abortion increasingly infringe upon a woman's right to choose even contraception. Leading physicians at the 2002 American College Health Association conference reported to me that through intimidation, protests from anti-reproductive rights legislators, office holders and activists discourage student health clinics from offering or advertising EC.

Our students deserve better. EC access must not be dependent on right-wing politics, restrictive clinic hours, or the individual bravado of a clinic provider. Empowering young women to be responsible in preventing unintended pregnancy requires over-the-counter access to emergency contraception 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In 2002, the Feminist Majority Foundation launched a petition gathering support for over-the-counter access to EC. I present more than 30,000 petitions to you, a mere token

of support on behalf of legions of Americans supporting this important public health measure.

The scientific evidence and public health imperative propelling EC's over-the-counter access is strong and undeniable. Access delayed is access denied. For the sake of women whose lives and futures are at stake, please make this decision on scientific merit, not politics.