

Congressman Rothman Introduces Legislation Requiring Federally-Funded Hospitals To Offer Rape Victim

For Immediate Release

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Congressman Rothman Introduces Legislation Requiring Federally-Funded Hospitals To Offer Rape Victims Emergency Contraception

(Washington, DC) Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) joined a bipartisan group of his congressional colleagues at an afternoon news conference on Capitol Hill today to introduce a sweeping pregnancy prevention bill. Rothman's "Compassionate Assistance for Rape Emergencies (CARE)" Act, which he co-authored with Congressman Rob Simmons (R-CT), requires federally-funded hospitals to offer Emergency Contraception (EC) to rape victims. Rothman was joined by Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ) who co-authored a similar legislation in the Senate with Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME).

"The 'Compassionate Assistance for Rape Emergencies' Act ensures that rape and sexual assault victims get the proper care and emergency contraception they need when they are rushed to a hospital after surviving an assault," Rothman said. "Guaranteeing a victim the right to emergency contraception will help prevent an estimated 22,000 pregnancies a year caused by sexual assault. Statistics show that every two minutes a woman is sexually assaulted in the United States. Each and every one of those women deserves to know that we support her and that she has a right to full medical treatment including emergency contraception, no matter what hospital she is taken to for treatment."

Rothman's "CARE" Act requires hospitals that receive federal funding to provide rape survivors with information about EC so victims can make an informed decision and then get access to EC if desired. Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs) are the most commonly used version of EC, which is an FDA-approved method of pregnancy prevention. ECPs are simply higher doses of regular birth control pills, which reduce a woman's risk of becoming pregnant by up to 95 percent when taken within 72 hours of intercourse. EC does not cause abortion; it works by inhibiting ovulation or fertilization, or by preventing the implantation of a fertilized egg before a pregnancy can occur. In fact, EC reduces the number of abortions by preventing pregnancies resulting from rape that would otherwise be terminated by an abortion.

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Pictured: (L-R) Congressman Steve Rothman, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Jon Corzine, and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.