

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 13, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
US Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

We are writing to express our disappointment with your December 7, 2011 decision to block the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recommendation to make Plan B One-Step available over-the-counter. We feel strongly that FDA regulations should be based on science. We write to you today to ask that you provide us with the rationale for this decision.

As numerous medical societies and patient advocates have argued, improved access to birth control, including emergency contraception, has been proven to reduce unintended pregnancies. Nearly half of all pregnancies that occur in the United States each year are unintended. Keeping Plan B behind the counter makes it harder for all women to obtain a safe and effective product they may need to prevent an unintended pregnancy.

We ask that you share with us your specific rationale and the scientific data you relied on for the decision to overrule the FDA recommendation. On behalf of the millions of women we represent, we want to be assured that this and future decisions affecting women's health will be based on medical and scientific evidence.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Daniel K. Akaka

Daniel Akaka
United States Senator

Carl Levin

Carl Levin
United States Senator

John F. Kerry

John Kerry
United States Senator

Tom Harkin

Tom Harkin
United States Senator

Al Franken

Al Franken
United States Senator

Frank R. Lautenberg

Frank Lautenberg
United States Senator

Bernie Sanders

Bernie Sanders
United States Senator

Ron Wyden

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator