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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

May 10, 2011

Dear Colleague,

For many Americans, the desire to have children and raise a family is first and foremost in their lives. However, accomplishing this goal is not always easy. Nearly ten million American men and women suffer from infertility, which means approximately one in eight couples of childbearing age cannot reproduce without medical assistance. Many patients, up to 80 percent, are helped with conventional therapies, such as drug treatment or surgery to repair reproductive organs. Since 1978, assisted reproductive technologies (ART), like in vitro fertilization, have provided another solution for some would be parents. However, unlike most medical procedures to treat diseases, insurance coverage for infertility treatment is rare and is one of the key reasons patients are unable to seek treatment.

Infertility treatments have proven quite successful. Today, approximately 1 in 100 babies in the US is conceived using ART. Unfortunately, for many couples the cost of infertility care is prohibitive. The highly specialized nature of the treatment results in costs of, on average, \$13,500 per cycle. For some patients, multiple cycles are required to achieve a successful pregnancy outcome. In 2003, the average cost per live birth was close to \$40,000. The lack of insurance coverage for this disease forces couples to choose between their basic right to establish a family and their future financial welfare- a choice no American should have to make. I invite you to help remedy this situation by cosponsoring the Family Act.

The Family Act will establish a federal tax credit to help offset the costs of infertility treatments and will help make this vital patient care more accessible to those who lack insurance coverage for these services, or who are unable to afford treatment. The bill is endorsed by RESOLVE, the National Infertility Association, and the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. I believe it is a necessary step towards ensuring that all of our citizens have the ability to raise a family.

I urge you to take action on behalf of couples suffering from infertility and become a cosponsor of the Family Act. For more information, or to become a cosponsor, please contact Karina Cabrera via email at karina_cabrera@gillibrand.senate.gov my office at (202) 224-4451.

Sincerely,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator