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# FDA Continues to Put Politics Before Women's Health

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Since February 2001, when the Center filed a citizen's petition from 70 organizations asking for over-the-counter status for emergency contraception (marketed as "Plan B"), there have been almost 14 million unintended pregnancies in the United States. Even though its own advisory board recommended Plan B for over-the-counter status, the FDA refused to make a decision, keeping Plan B, and women's health, in limbo. In January 2005, we filed suit against the Acting Commissioner of the FDA. Our case argues that by denying women access to Plan B without a prescription, and by failing to follow its own procedures and statutory and regulatory mandates, the FDA violated the Administrative Procedures Act and the U.S. Constitution.

Nonetheless, on August 26, the FDA announced that it would *again* delay making a decision about Plan B.

Our case is moving forward. But we're not the only ones fed up. In September, Dr. Susan Wood resigned as head of the FDA's Office of Women's Health—because of the delay. "I can no longer serve as [FDA] staff when scientific and clinical evidence, fully evaluated and recommended for approval, has been overruled." She went on to say that this "is contrary to my core commitment to improving and advancing women's health."

We're glad that Dr. Wood stood up for women's health. It is outrageous that the FDA continues to put politics before women's health. "The FDA is ignoring the medical and scientific facts. Emergency contraception meets all the criteria for over-the-counter availability for women of all ages. It is safe for women and adolescents, and it improves their lives and health because it prevents unintended pregnancies," says Simon Heller, Center attorney.