

# University of Saskatchewan Students' Union

Room 65, Lower Place Riel Student Centre  
University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
S7N 5A3



Telephone: (306) 966-6960  
Fax: (306) 966-6978  
E-mail: [contactus@ussu.ca](mailto:contactus@ussu.ca)  
Website: [www.ussu.ca](http://www.ussu.ca)

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

March 25, 2010

Number of Pages: 1

### **USSU Concerned Over Recent G8 Maternal and Child Health Initiative**

The University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) Executive today expressed its dismay at the recent comments by Prime Minister Steven Harper, in which he excluded funding for safe abortions from the G8 "legacy initiative" on maternal and child health and at the parliamentary vote excluding contraception from this package.

Prime Minister Harper's comments came in response to concerns raised by the opposition that the G8 aid package would not include money for contraception or abortion. Prime Minister Harper stated that, "We are not closing the door to any option, and that includes contraception, but we do not want a debate, here or elsewhere, on abortion." Parliament however may have closed the door on contraception option with yesterday's nay vote to include contraception in the aid package.

USSU President Kirkland, speaking on behalf of the Executive, stated that they are disappointed that the federal government is succumbing to such regressive policies when given the chance to be a recognized world leader as this year's G8 President.

"Canada, as the President of the G8, is setting the agenda for the direction of the globe with regards to maternal and child health-care. Not only is denying contraception funding to the parts of the world with the highest incidence of HIV an exceptionally bad way to encourage maternal and child health, but it is hypocritical at best for Canada to deny the same rights of choice in health to women in developing countries that Canadian women can currently access."

President Kirkland went on to explain that the University of Saskatchewan is home to a number of international students and that Canada's international policy reflects upon this and all other post-secondary institutions in the country. He added that it would be a shame if this policy negatively affected the decisions of international students to study here.

"This kind of policy flies in the face of decades of progressive debates, that resulted in a necessary increase in women gaining control over their own bodies and over reproductive choice. We are a nation where free and fair debate is part of our social and political experience and this is mirrored in the Students' Union, which encourages such debate. "

President Kirkland added that the Executive has formally expressed these concerns by sending letters to PM Stephen Harper and the leaders of the opposition parties expressing the USSU's hopes for the inclusion of funding for contraception and safe abortion in the funding package and a debate on the issue.

**For more information about this media release, please contact:**

**Warren Kirkland**  
USSU President  
**Office:** 306-966-6965  
**Cell:** 306-241-6006