

# Teen Pregnancy: Lessons in Both Health Policy and Social Norms

Annual George Silver Lecture

George Washington University

April 7, 2011

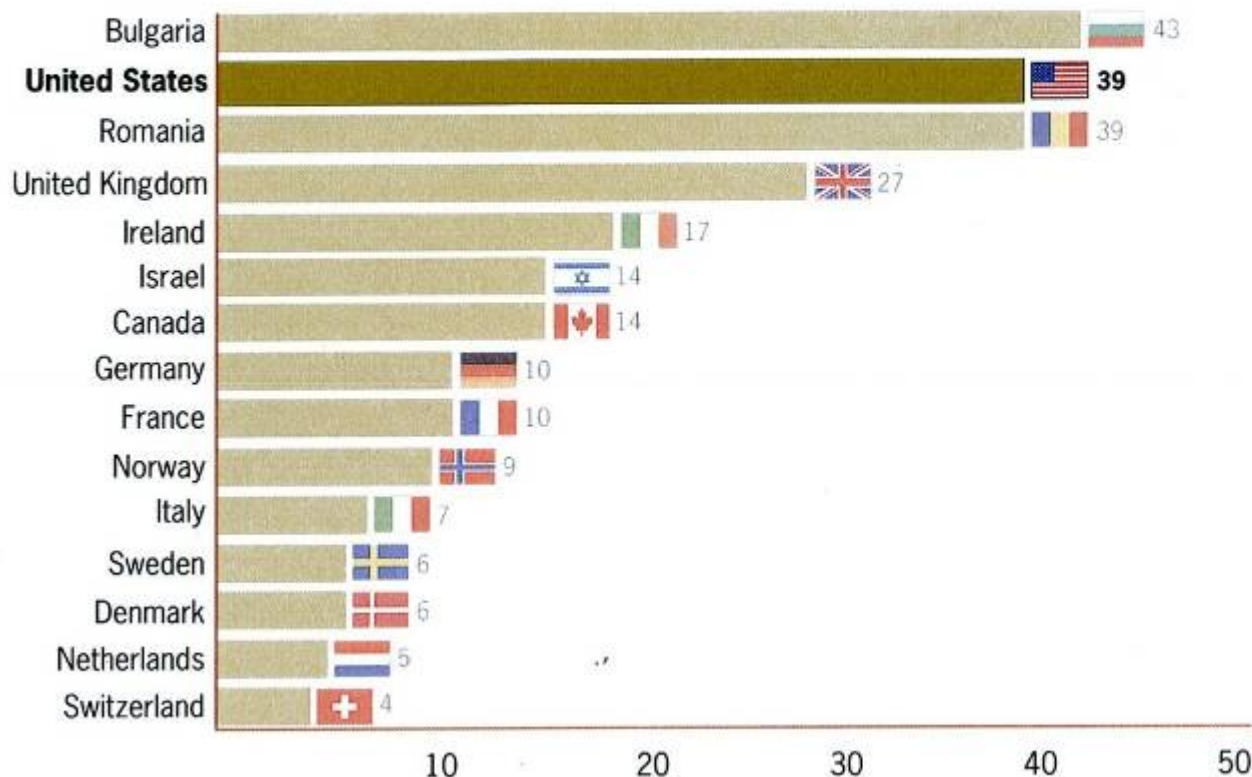
Sarah Brown

CEO, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and  
Unplanned Pregnancy

# Teen Births

**Teen birth rates internationally, per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years, 2008 and 2009**

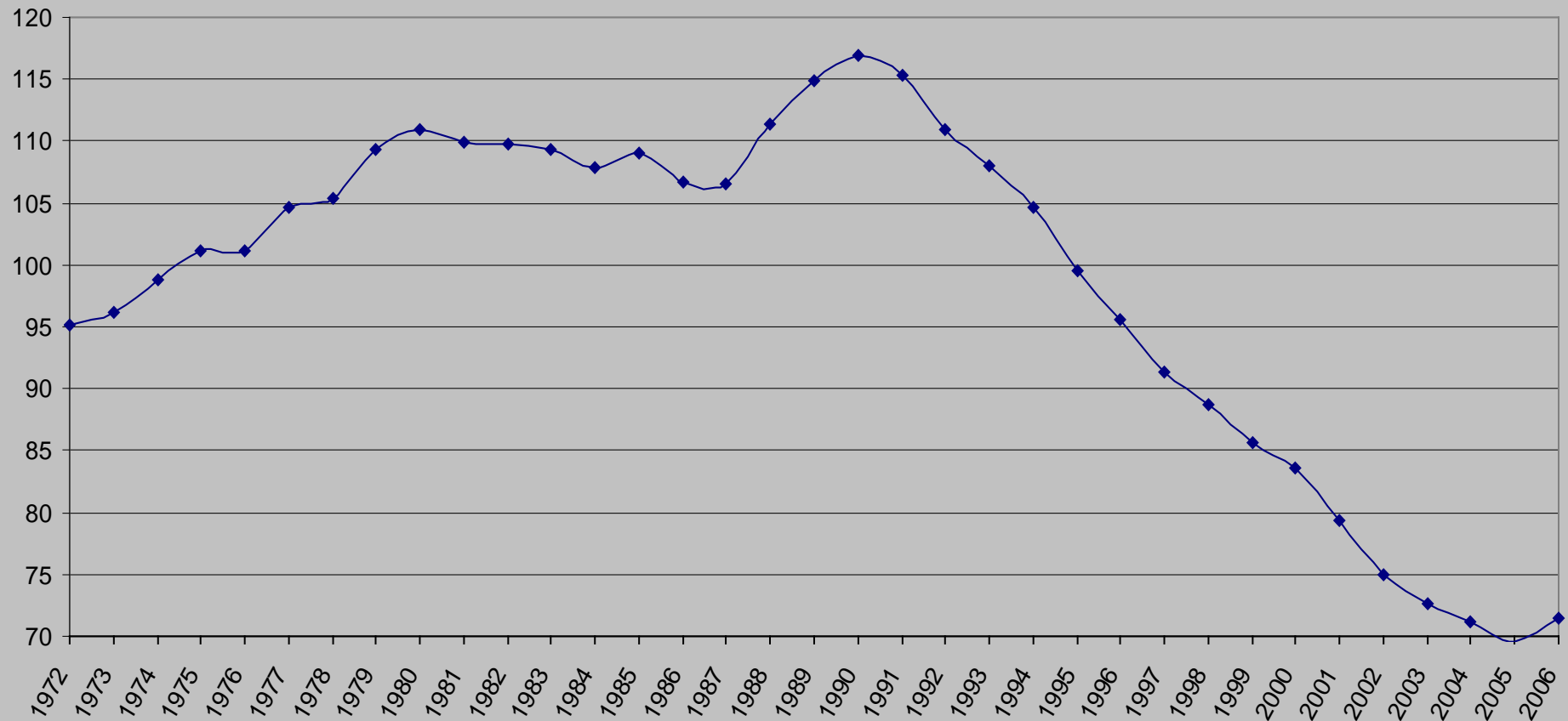
Teen birth rates in the US are higher than in some other developed countries.



SOURCE: UN Demographic Yearbook (all data for 2008, except US 2009 preliminary data).



# National Teen Pregnancy Rates, 1972-2006





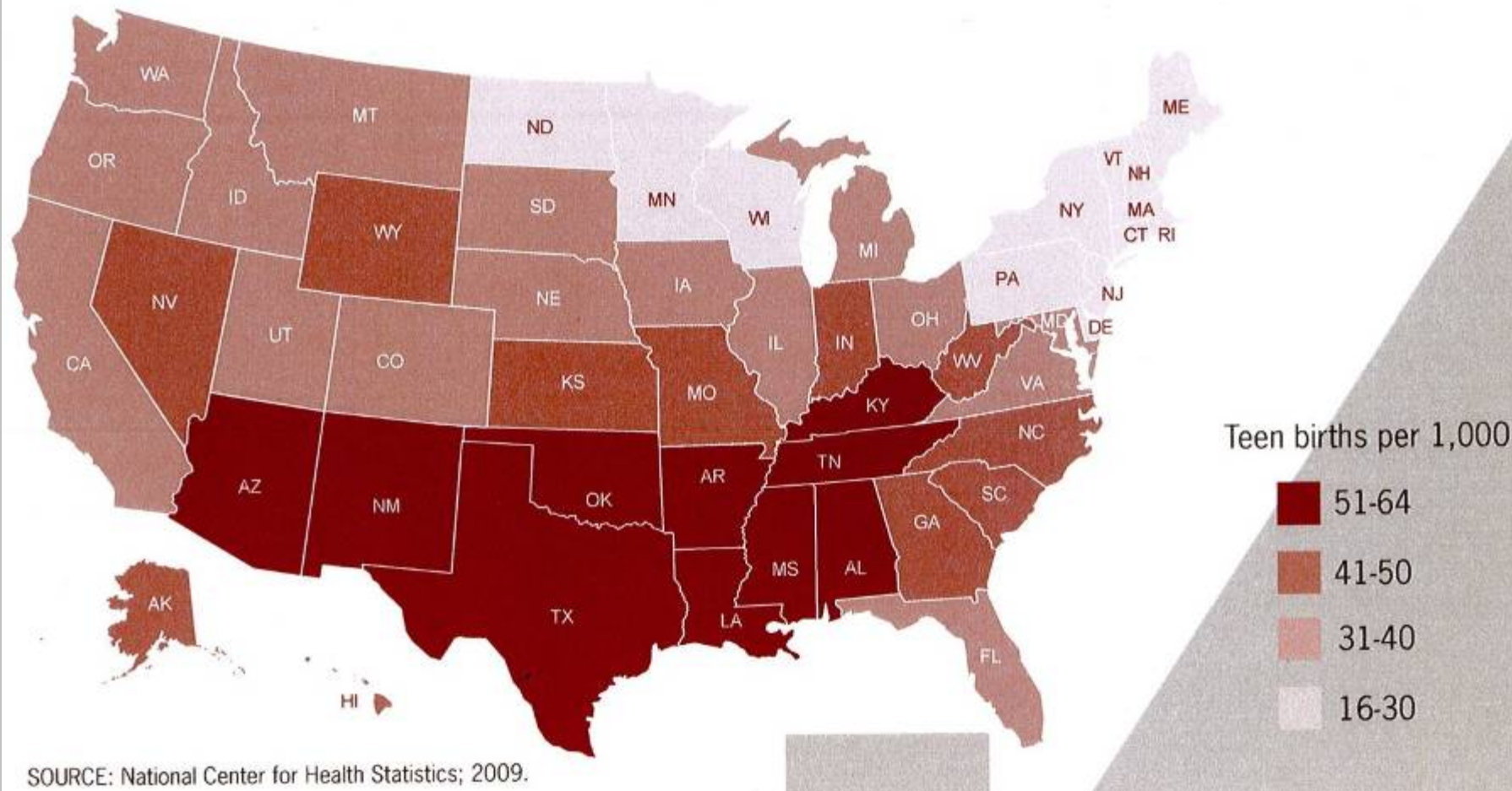
# National Teen Birth Rates, 1940-2009



Sources: Ventura, S.J., Mathews, T.J., & Hamilton, B.E. (2001). Births to Teenagers in the United States: 1940-2000. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 49(10).; Hamilton, B.E., Martin, J.A., & Ventura, S.J. (2009). Preliminary Data for 2007. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 57(12).

## Teen birth rates by state per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years, 2009

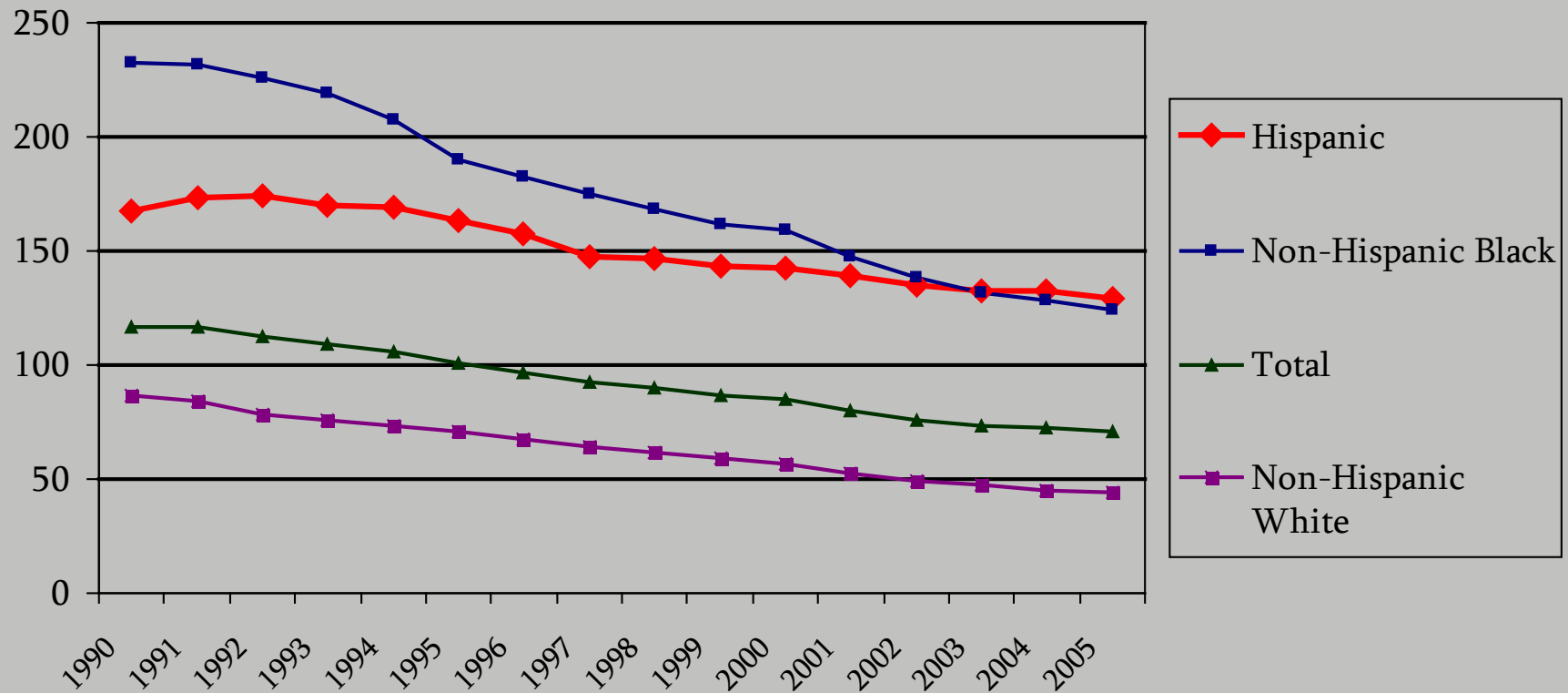
Teen birth rates were lowest in the Northeast and upper Midwest and highest across the southern states.



SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics; 2009.



# National Teen Pregnancy Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 1990-2005

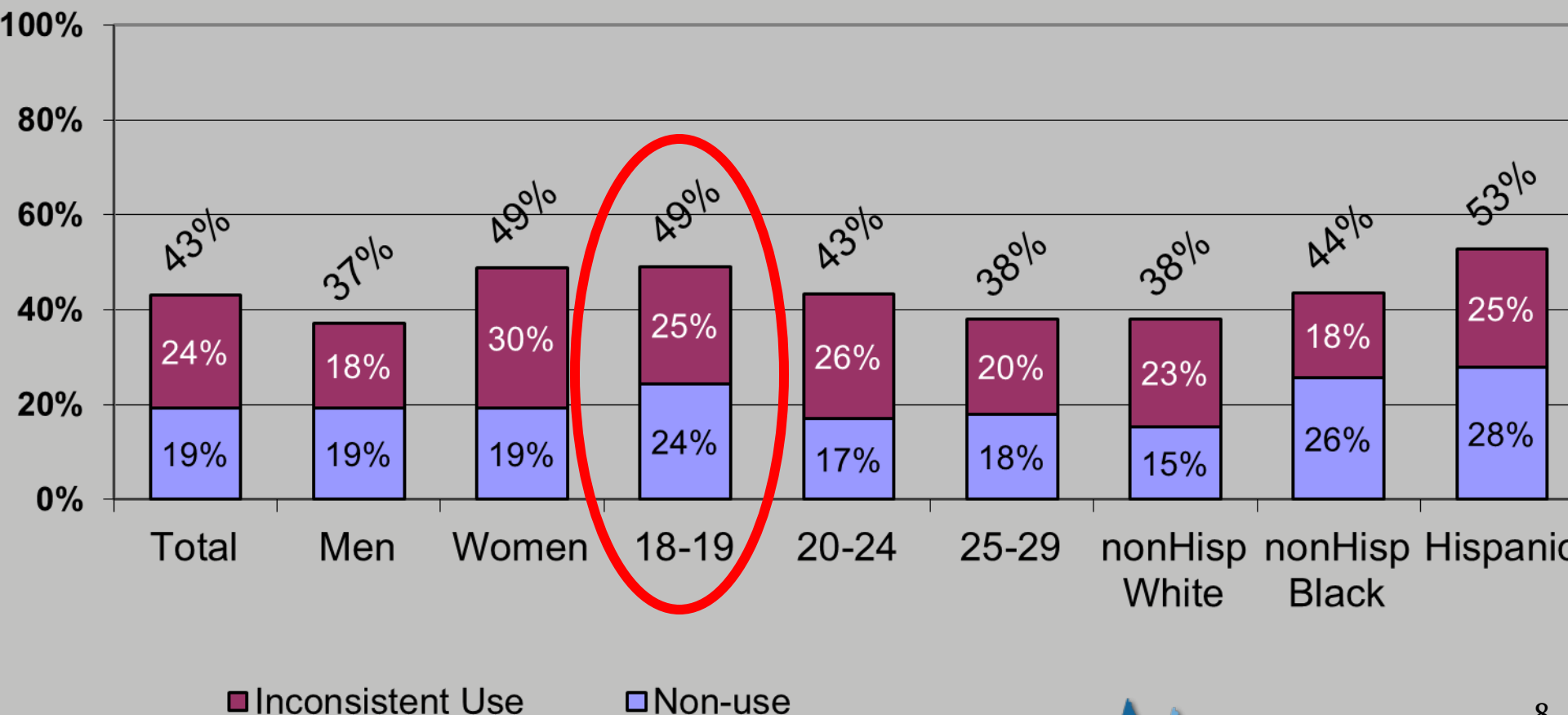






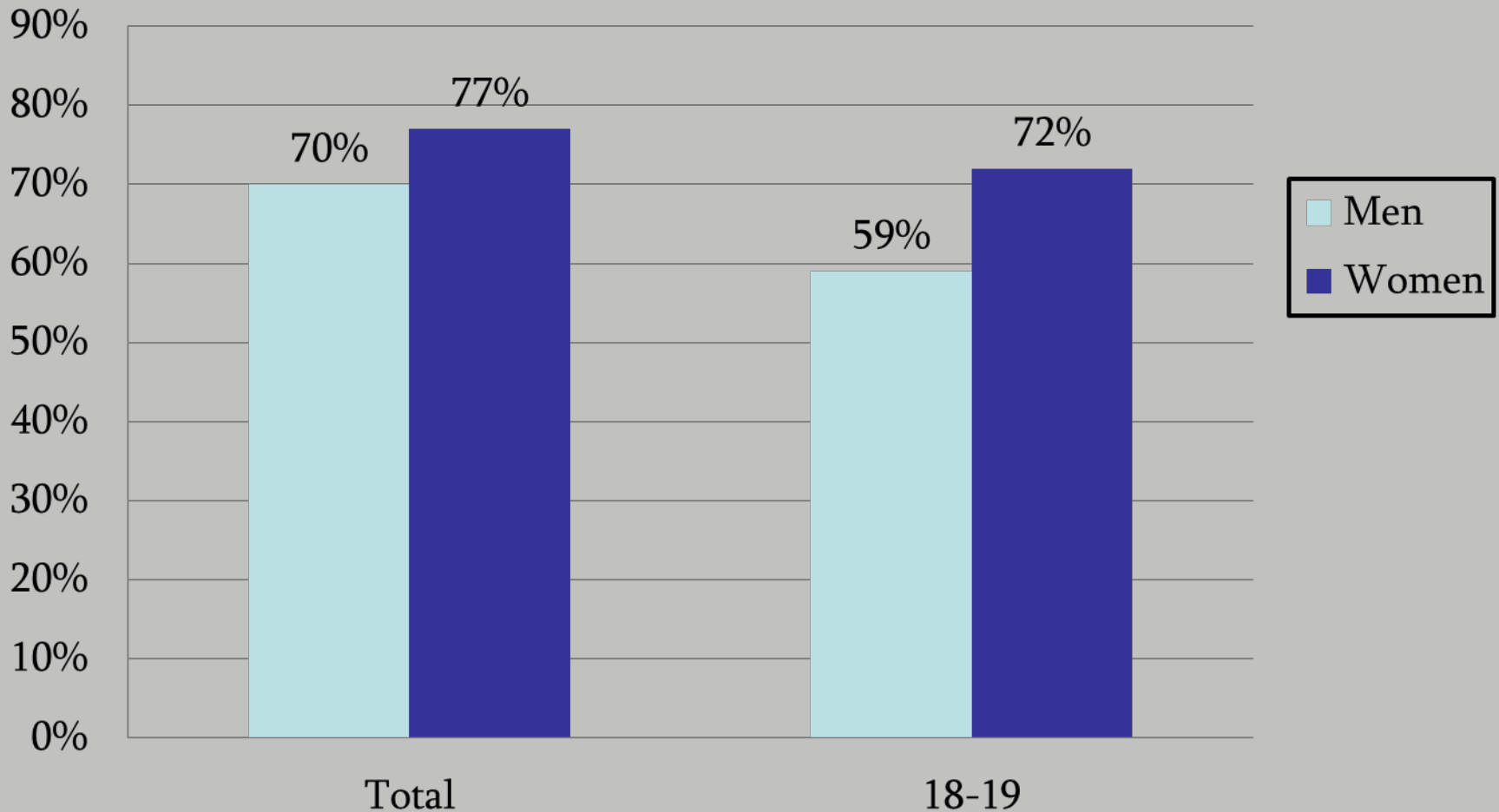
# Consistently Inconsistent

Pregnancy Protection Status Among Unmarried Young Adults Currently in a Sexual Relationship and not Pregnant or Trying to Get Pregnant





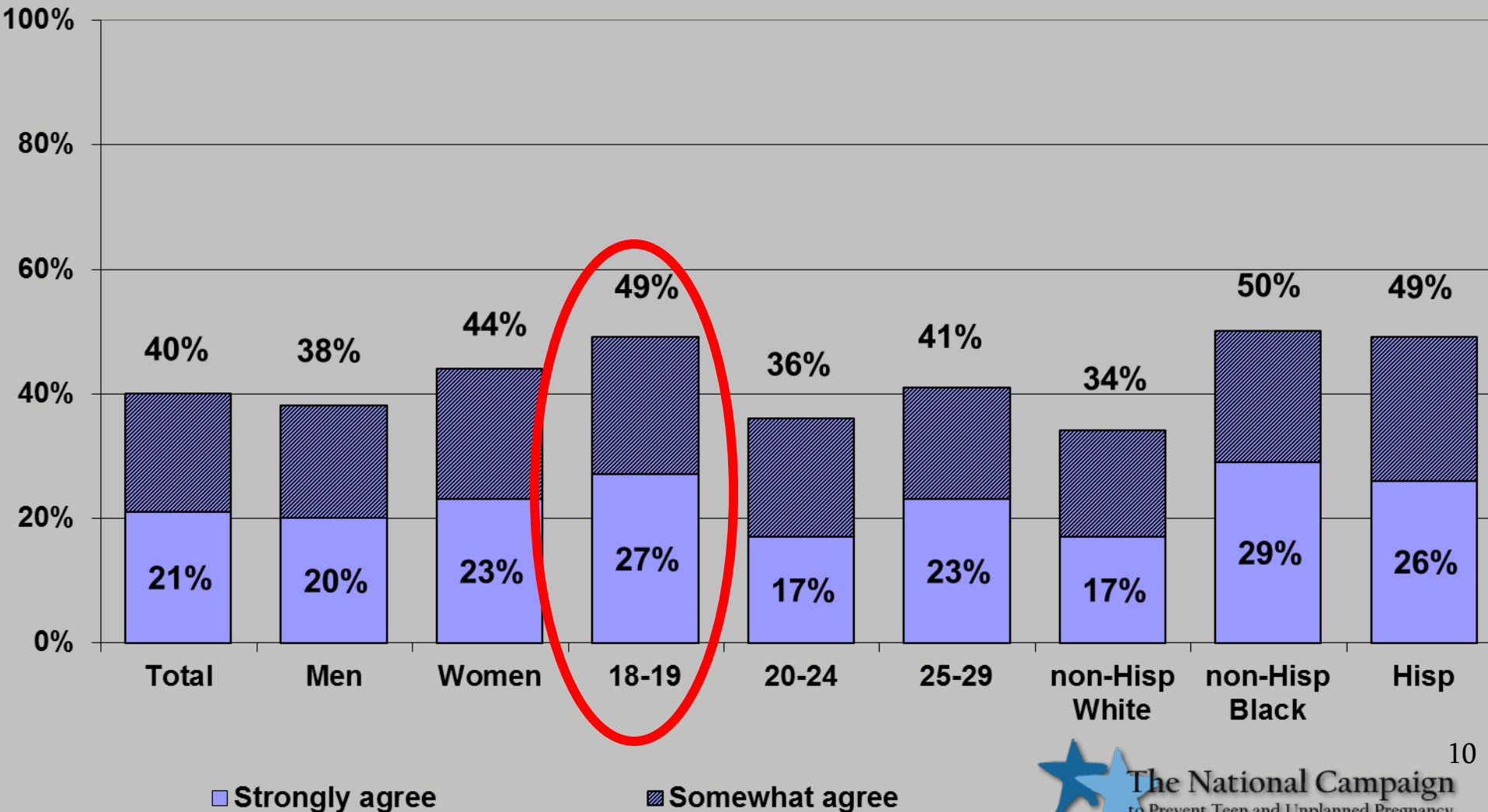
## Unmarried Young Adults Age 18-29 Who Agree with the Statement: “It is OK for an unmarried female to have a child,” by Gender





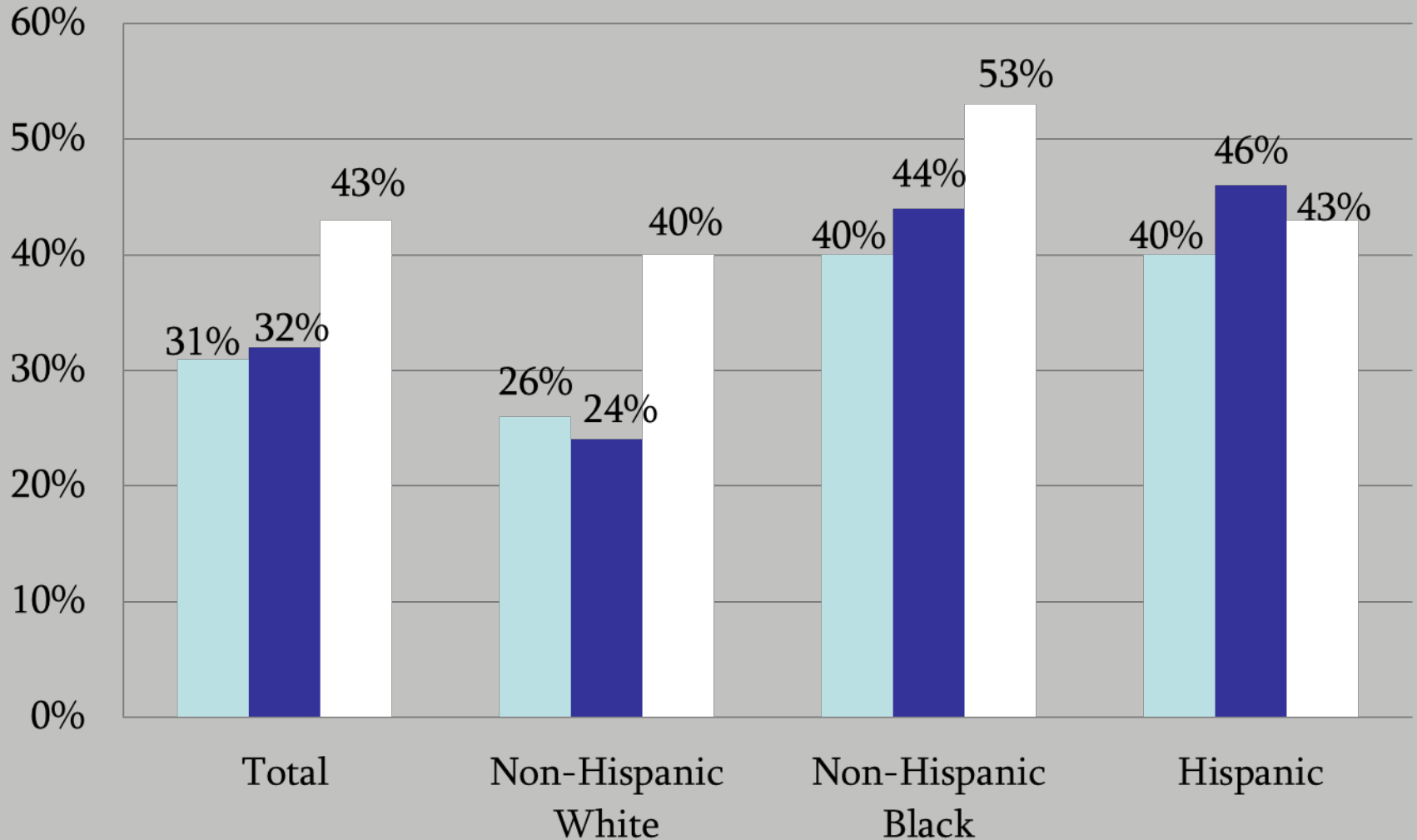
# Why Tempt Fate?

It Doesn't Matter if You Use Birth Control or Not,  
When it's Your Time to Get Pregnant it Will Happen





## Unmarried Young Adults Age 18-29 Who Somewhat or Strongly Agree With the Following Statements



# Aunt Sarah's Tips

- Babies need adult parents.
- Babies don't cement relationships, they stress them.
- Babies don't give unconditional love; they demand it from the adults around them.



# More Aunt Sarah...

- To girls: sex won't make him yours and a baby won't make him stay.
- To boys: making a baby doesn't make you a man; being a devoted husband and father might...
- “If it happens, it happens” is no way to start a family. And “I just never really thought about it” isn't either.



# And finally....

- Getting pregnant or causing pregnancy, having babies, and starting families are perhaps the most important things we ever do, with generational effects. These major steps need to be thought about carefully, not stumbled into. We think and talk about so many less important things all the time: what's for dinner, March Madness brackets, what movie to see this weekend... Surely the event of when to become a parent, with whom, and under what circumstances deserve at least the same amount of time and attention....

# Thank You!

TheNationalCampaign.org

StayTeen.org

SexReally.com

Bedsider.org

**My email: ssbrown@thenc.org**

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