

Opinion: Obama's betrayal of women

By Robin Abcarian, Los Angeles Times

President Obama spit his game, as the kids say, when he spoke to an enthusiastic crowd at a Planned Parenthood conference a little over a week ago: "You're making me blush," he cooed to their thunderous applause. "I love you back."

Oh, how he wooed them: "Forty years after the Supreme Court affirmed a woman's constitutional right to privacy, including the right to choose, we shouldn't have to remind people that when it comes to a woman's health, no politician should get to decide what's best for you."

A week later, he spit in their eye.

His administration is fighting a federal judge's ruling that the emergency contraception pill known as Plan B should be available to teenagers and girls of all ages without a prescription. Obama's Justice Department appealed the ruling Wednesday.

Planned Parenthood is probably getting used to this shabby treatment from a president who loves them to their face but dallies with the right behind their backs.

In a news conference during his visit to Mexico on Thursday, Obama defended the appeal, noting that the FDA had just recommended lowering the age at which a teenager can purchase the pill without a prescription from 17 to 15.

"I'm very comfortable with the decision they've made right now based on solid scientific evidence for girls 15 and older," he told reporters, according to Politico.

But medical groups like the American Academy of Pediatrics

operating on solid scientific evidence, and U.S. District Judge Edward Korman, also operating on solid scientific evidence, agreed that the pill is safe for all girls of reproductive age.

Last month, in his ruling, Korman rapped the disingenuous claim by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius that the drug's availability could pose dangers if used by 11-year-olds.

"This case is not about the potential misuse of Plan B by 11-year-olds," Korman wrote. "These emergency contraceptives would be among the safest drugs sold over-the-counter, the number of 11-year-olds using these drugs is likely to be miniscule. ... Instead, the invocation of the adverse effect of Plan B on 11-year-olds is an excuse to deprive the overwhelming majority of women of their right to obtain contraceptives without unjustified and burdensome restrictions."

If an 11-year-old can buy an aspirin, wrote Korman, then by the FDA's own logic, she should be able to buy Plan B.

We all agree that adolescents have no business having sex. Even older teenagers who engage in sex are often playing with fire. But we all live in the real world. It's a place where kids have sex and face dire consequences. They need to be helped, not hindered.

You'd think the pro-choice father of two adolescent girls would have a more progressive stance on this important issue. He can couch his language in concerned-parent strains all he wants, but it's the political heat he's trying to avoid.

Obama's relationship with Planned Parenthood is like a bad marriage where the put-upon spouse has nowhere else to go.

But he shouldn't be let off the hook for abandoning the kids.