

October 19, 2017

The Honorable Diana DeGette
United States House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Judy Chu
United States House of Representatives
2423 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Louise Slaughter
United States House of Representatives
2469 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lois Frankel
United States House of Representatives
1037 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives DeGette, Slaughter, Chu, and Frankel,

The undersigned organizations write to express strong support for the *Protect Access to Birth Control Act*, your legislation to strike the two interim final rules (IFRs) published on October 13, 2017 that roll back the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) birth control coverage which has ensured access to birth control coverage for more than 62 million women around the country.

The Trump administration's IFRs allow virtually any employer or university to refuse to cover contraception in their group health plans on the basis of religious or moral objection. Individuals would also be able to request coverage that does not include contraception, and issuers would be permitted to opt-out of providing group or individual coverage on the basis of any religious or moral objection.

These IFRs are particularly outrageous given that birth control is basic healthcare for millions around the country. The nonpartisan Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommended that birth control be covered as women's preventive care because it is fundamental to improving not only women's health, but the health of their families as well and this recommendation was reaffirmed as recently as last year. Nearly nine in 10 women of reproductive age will use contraception at some point in their lives, whether for family planning or other medical reasons like treating endometriosis. The rate of unintended pregnancy is at its lowest in 30 years¹, and the rate of pregnancy among teens is at a historic low² because of expanded access to birth control and sex education. This access furthers equality, enabling women to pursue professional and educational opportunities.

¹ "U.S. Unintended Pregnancy Rate Falls to 30-Year Low; Declines Seen in Almost All Groups, but Disparities Remain." Guttmacher Institute. October 18, 2016. Accessed October 17, 2017.

<https://www.guttmacher.org/news-release/2016/us-unintended-pregnancy-rate-falls-30-year-low-declines-seen-almost-all-groups>.

² "U.S. Teen Pregnancy, Birth and Abortion Rates Reach the Lowest Levels in Almost Four Decades." Guttmacher Institute. September 07, 2017. Accessed October 17, 2017.

<https://www.guttmacher.org/news-release/2016/us-teen-pregnancy-birth-and-abortion-rates-reach-lowest-levels-almost-four-decades>.

The ACA's birth control benefit has also improved women's economic security. The decision whether or when to have children is one of the most important economic decisions a woman will make in her lifetime, and access to birth control coverage is critical to this planning. Furthermore, the benefit saved women an estimated \$1.4 billion on birth control pills in its first year alone.³

Like you, we are deeply concerned that as a result of these IFRs some people will no longer be guaranteed birth control coverage under the ACA. We appreciate your efforts to strike these harmful and discriminatory rules and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure that access to birth control is a reality for those who rely on it.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Nursing
American Civil Liberties Union
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Black Women's Health Imperative
Catholics for Choice
Center for American Progress
Center for Reproductive Rights
CREDO
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
Human Rights Campaign
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Keep Birth Control Copay Free Campaign
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Organization for Women

³ Lachman, Samantha. "Women Are Spending \$1.4 Billion Less On Birth Control Due To Obamacare: Report." The Huffington Post. July 07, 2015. Accessed October 17, 2017. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/07/07/obamacare-birth-control-_n_7747332.html.

National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
People For the American Way
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Connection Action Fund
Population Institute
Positive Women's Network - USA
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
The United State of Women
UltraViolet Action
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Voices for Progress