

May 13, 2015

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

The undersigned organizations are committed to advancing reproductive health, rights, and justice and related social justice causes with a vision of accessible reproductive health care, improved health equity, and strong, healthy communities nationwide. To this end, we strongly urge you to reject policy riders in the Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations legislation that would withhold insurance coverage and funding for comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion.

Safe abortion services should be available and affordable to all regardless of the ability to pay, source of insurance, or where someone lives. However, since the passage of the Hyde Amendment in 1976 and other subsequent policy riders, the appropriations process has been used as a vehicle to systematically deny access to comprehensive reproductive health care. And now there is a sustained effort to put these restrictions into permanent law.

We urge you, as leaders of the Appropriations Committee, to oppose efforts to attack reproductive health through the appropriations process and work to lift policy riders that restrict funding for abortion coverage and care for: (i) Medicaid, Medicare, and Children's Health Insurance Program beneficiaries; (ii) federal employees and their dependents; (iii) Peace Corps volunteers; (iv) Native American women; (v) women in federal prisons and detention centers, including those detained for immigration purposes; (vi) women who receive health care through community health centers; (vii) victims of trafficking; and (viii) low-income women in the District of Columbia through the use of local funds.

Withholding coverage for abortion care creates profound hardships for women and families across the country, particularly for those who already face significant barriers to receiving high-quality health care. Those impacted most by these harmful coverage bans are low-income women, immigrant women, young women, and women of color. For many, coverage for abortion means the difference between getting the health care they need and being denied that care. Studies show that when policymakers place restrictions on Medicaid coverage of abortion, it forces one in four poor women to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term.¹ Additionally, a woman who seeks an abortion, but is denied, is three times more likely to fall into poverty than one who is able to get an abortion.²

We commend the members of Congress who have stood up against these attacks. These policies have harmed our families, our communities, and our health for far too long. We hope that ultimately Congress lifts all abortion coverage restrictions in appropriations bills and elsewhere, so that every woman, whether she has public or private insurance, has coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related health care, including abortion, and thus can make personal health decisions based on what is best for her and her family.

Sincerely,

¹ Stanley K. Henshaw, Theodore J. Joyce, Amanda Dennis, Lawrence B. Finer and Kelly Blanchard. *Restrictions on Medicaid Funding for Abortions: A Literature Review*. (Guttmacher Institute, 2009). Available at <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/MedicaidLitReview.pdf>.

² Diana Greene Foster, PhD, Sarah C. M. Roberts, DrPH and Jane Mauldon, PhD. *Socioeconomic consequences of abortion compared to unwanted birth*. Abstract from the American Public Health Association's annual meeting 2012. Available at <https://apha.confex.com/apha/140am/webprogram/Paper263858.html>.

4000 Years for Choice
Abortion Care Network
Abortion Conversation Project
Access Reproductive Care-Southeast (ARC-Southeast)
ACCESS Women's Health Justice
Advocates for Youth
Allentown Women's Center
American Civil Liberties Union
American Medical Women's Association
Baltimore Abortion Fund
Black Women's Health Imperative
Blue Ridge AAF, Inc.
Carolina Center for Women
Catholics for Choice
Center for Inquiry
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Women Policy Studies
Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice at UC Berkeley School of Law
Charlottesville (VA) Chapter of the National Organization For Women (CNOW)
CHOICES: Memphis Center for Reproductive Health
Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program
Emergency Medical Assistance, Inc.
Forward Together
GA Reproductive Justice Access Network
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
Ibis Reproductive Health
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Ipas
Kentucky Health Justice Network
Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center
Medical Students for Choice
NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon
National Abortion Federation
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Jewish Women Minneapolis
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
ND Women in Need Fund
Network for Reproductive Options (NRO)
New York Abortion Access Fund (NYAAF)
NM Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Northland Family Planning Centers
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Pro-Choice Resources
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Religious Institute
Reproductive Health Access Project
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Secular Woman
Sexual Violence Center
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
SisterReach
South Dakota Access for Every Woman Fund
The CAIR Project
The Jane Fund of Central Massachusetts
The Lilith Fund
Unitarian Universalist Association
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Western States Center
Women for Women
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)
Women's Health & Education Fund of Rhode Island
Women's Medical Fund
Women's Reproductive Rights Assistance Project
WV FREE

cc: Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur
Congressman Peter J. Visclosky
Congressman José E. Serrano
Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro
Congressman David E. Price
Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard
Congressman Sam Farr
Congressman Chaka Fattah
Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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Congressman Steve Israel
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Congressman Henry Cuellar
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Congressman Mike Quigley
Congressman Derek Kilmer