

December 6, 2011

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on the Constitution:

The undersigned organizations stand together committed to ending discrimination. We have a long history of addressing the many forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race and sex, and look forward to continuing to work with you to respond to these pernicious problems.

Accordingly, we are very concerned to see the fight against discrimination being misappropriated to push a bill that does nothing to combat sex and race discrimination, but instead imposes additional barriers on women in the United States. If passed, this bill would exacerbate health disparities. We feel strongly that the Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass Prenatal Nondiscrimination Act of 2011 (H.R.3541) is not the way to address discrimination and therefore we must strongly oppose it.

The problem of racial disparities in health care is real. African American women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy related causes than white women and the unintended pregnancy rate is 67% compared to 40% for white women. Instead of addressing these critical issues, this bill exacerbates the disparities by further restricting certain women's access to comprehensive reproductive health care services, scrutinizing the health care decisions of women of color, and penalizing health care providers who serve communities of color. Instead of empowering women of color to make informed, personal health care decisions, this bill prevents them from doing so.

Similarly, there are numerous examples of on-going legal and constitutional sex discrimination, such as pay equity or gender-based violence. Yet this bill does nothing to address gender discrimination. Instead, this bill places additional barriers between women and their health care.

We believe there are effective ways to take on the complex problems of racial and sex discrimination and we would welcome the opportunity to work with members of the subcommittee to advance legislation that would end discrimination in the United States. However, we must strongly oppose this bill, which does nothing to address ongoing discrimination.

Sincerely,

ACCESS Women's Health Justice
American Civil Liberties Union
Advocates for Youth
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
AIDS United
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian American Justice Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice

Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice
Black Women's Health Imperative
California Black Women's Health Project
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
California NOW
Catholics for Choice
Center for American Progress Action Fund
Center for Genetics and Society
Center for HIV Law & Policy
Civil Liberties and Public Policy
Generations Ahead
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance (HIV PJA)
Japanese American Citizens League
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Law Students for Reproductive Justice
Legal Momentum
MI LOLA
NAACP
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Jewish Women Los Angeles Section
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
National Health Law Program
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Population & Development Program
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
SisterSong NYC
SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW - Atlanta, Georgia
TakeAction Minnesota
Trust Black Women
U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN)
Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD)
Women's Media Center
Young Women United