

January 10, 2014

Senator Barbara Mikulski
Chair
United States Senate Committee on
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Harold Rogers
Chair
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Shelby
Vice-Chair
United States Senate Committee on
Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Vice-Chair Shelby, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

We strongly urge you to support women's reproductive health programs in the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) appropriations process and to reject any policy riders and funding cuts that would limit access to critical women's health services. We are deeply concerned that the appropriations process will once again be used as a tool to restrict women's health and access to reproductive health care.

Since the passage of the Hyde Amendment in 1976, the appropriations process has been used as a vehicle to systematically restrict women's access to comprehensive reproductive health care, oftentimes with policies that disproportionately harm low income women and women of color. In this Congress, there have been multiple attempts to use the appropriations process to incrementally chip away at women's health, and when anti-women's health policies are attached to must-pass appropriations legislation, members of Congress are forced to choose between shutting down the government and putting women's health in jeopardy.

In recent months, we witnessed a 16 day government shutdown where multiple attempts were made to limit women's access to health care. These proposals included expanding religious refusal rights to allow bosses to block women's access to preventive services such as contraception and cancer screenings, and an effort to ban the District of Columbia from using its own locally raised funds to provide abortion services. As a coalition of organizations that care about the health and economic security of women and their families, we strongly oppose any efforts to attack women's health through the appropriations process, including, but not limited to:

- Reducing or eliminating funding for the Title X family planning program which provides comprehensive contraceptive services, preventive health screenings, and sexually transmitted infection prevention, testing, and counseling to nearly five million low-income women and men nationwide;
- Eliminating federal funding for preventive and primary care services provided by Planned Parenthood affiliates;
- Cutting funds from international family planning programs;
- Undermining or eliminating the contraceptive coverage benefit;

- Banning insurance coverage of virtually all abortion services in the federal employee health insurance program and for Medicaid beneficiaries;
- Reinstating the harmful “Global Gag Rule” on foreign aid;
- Eliminating access to abortion care for women in immigration detention facilities in almost all circumstances;
- Prohibiting contributions to the United Nations Population Fund;
- Expanding current refusal law to limit women’s access to health care services;
- Undermining the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative by re-allocating funding to prioritize abstinence-only-until marriage programs;
- Eliminating abortion coverage in health plans sold through the health insurance exchanges created under the Affordable Care Act;
- Defunding the Affordable Care Act piecemeal or in its entirety.

We urge you to pass funding legislation free of these restrictions on women’s health.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
 American Association of University Women (AAUW)
 American Civil Liberties Union
 American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
 American Public Health Association
 American Society for Reproductive Medicine
 Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
 Catholics for Choice
 Center for Reproductive Rights
 Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
 NARAL Pro-Choice America
 National Abortion Federation
 National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
 National Center for Lesbian Rights
 National Council of Jewish Women
 National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
 National Health Law Program
 National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
 National Organization for Women
 National Partnership for Women & Families
 National Women's Health Network
 National Women’s Law Center
 Physicians for Reproductive Health
 Planned Parenthood Federation of America
 Population Action International
 Population Connection
 Population Institute
 Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
 Reproductive Health Technologies Project
 Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
 Women's Collective