

June 18, 2012

Dear U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committee Members:

We strongly urge you to support women's reproductive health programs in the Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) 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. In this Congress, there have been multiple attempts to use the appropriations process to incrementally chip away at women's health. For example, the appropriations process has been exploited to prohibit the District of Columbia from using its own locally-raised funds to provide abortion care, to weaken the evidence-based standards for sexuality education that help ensure our young people have access to comprehensive and medically accurate information, and to attempt to create additional barriers to care for rural women by banning abortion providers who use telemedicine from receiving telehealth grants.

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. 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 over 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;
- 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.

Over the past several months, we have witnessed efforts to weaken the Violence Against Women Act, repeal the Affordable Care Act, impose numerous restrictions on a woman's constitutionally-protected right to abortion care, and limit women's access to contraception.

We commend the members of Congress who have stood up against these attacks on women and we urge *all* members of Congress to make the health and economic security of our nation a priority by opposing all attempts to limit access to the comprehensive health care women and their families need to stay healthy and contribute to our nation's economy.

Sincerely,

Abortion Care Network
Advocates for Youth
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Civil Liberties Union
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Medical Student Association
American Medical Women's Association
American Nurses Association
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Black Women's Health Imperative
Catholics for Choice
Center for Reproductive Rights
Childbirth Connection
Feminist Majority Foundation
Friends of UNFPA
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
International Women's Health Coalition
Jewish Women International
Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Abortion Federation
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National Latina Health Network
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 Choice and Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Action International

Population Connection
Population Institute
Public Health Institute
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Religious Institute
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Wider Opportunities for Women