

April 7, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski:

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 economic security, and strong, healthy communities nationwide. To this end, we strongly urge you to reject policy riders in the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriations legislation that would withhold insurance coverage and funding for comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion.

Safe, quality 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, the appropriations process has been used as a vehicle to systematically deny access to comprehensive reproductive health care. Worse, there is now a sustained effort to expand the reach of the Hyde Amendment and related coverage restrictions by regularly inserting such restrictions into new legislation.

We urge you, as leaders of the Appropriations Committee, to oppose efforts to attack reproductive health through the appropriations process and reject 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; and (vi) low-income women in the District of Columbia through the use of local funds. Additionally, we urge you to reject efforts to add new policy riders that seek to undermine women's access to health care.

Withholding coverage for abortion care creates profound hardships for people across the country, particularly for those who already face significant barriers to receiving high-quality health care, such as low-income women, immigrant women, young women, women of color, and transgender and gender-nonconforming people. 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 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, including many on this committee and the cosponsors of the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in

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>.

Health Insurance (EACH) Woman Act (H.R. 2972). The EACH Woman Act was introduced in the House by Congresswoman Barbara Lee in July of 2015 and now has a total of 116 cosponsors.

These policies have harmed our families, our communities, and our health for far too long. We hope that Congress ultimately lifts all abortion coverage restrictions so that every woman, whether she has public or private insurance, has coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related health care, including abortion—thus allowing her to make personal health decisions based on what is best for her and her family.

Sincerely,

A Fund, Inc.

Abortion Rights Fund of Western Massachusetts

Abortion Support Network

Access Reproductive Care-Southeast

Advocates for Youth

Alianza Americas

American Civil Liberties Union

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon

Backline

Baltimore Abortion Fund

BiNet USA

Black Women's Health Imperative

Blue Ridge Abortion Assistance Fund, Inc.

Broward Women's Emergency Fund

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

Carolina Abortion Fund

Catholics for Choice

Center for Community Change Action

Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)

Center for Reproductive Rights

Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice at UC Berkeley School of Law

Central Florida Women's Emergency Fund
Charlottesville NOW
CHOICES. Memphis Center for Reproductive Health
Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Disciples Justice Action Network
Emergency Medical Assistance, Inc. (EMA)
Family Equality Council
Feminist Majority Foundation
Feminist Women's Health Center
FORGE, Inc.
Fund Texas Choice
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
Healthy and Free Tennessee
Hoosier Abortion Fund
Human Rights Campaign
Ibis Reproductive Health
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Ipas
Jane Fund of Central Massachusetts
Jewish Women International
Kentucky Health Justice Network
La Frontera Fund
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Lady Parts Justice League
LATINOJUSTICE Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund
League of United Latin American Citizens
Louisiana NOW
Marriage Equality USA

Maternal and Child Health Access

Medical Students for Choice

MI Lead

Mississippi Reproductive Freedom Fund

NA'AMAT USA

NARAL Pro-Choice America

NARAL Pro-Choice Texas

National Abortion Federation

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)

National Council of Jewish Women

National Council of Jewish Women Chicago North Shore

National Council of Jewish Women Colorado Section

National Council of Jewish Women South Shore Section

National Council of Jewish Women WA Section

National Council of Jewish Women, Essex County Section

National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles Section

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 Organization for Women

National Partnership for Women & Families

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance

National Women's Health Network

National Women's Law Center

ND Women In Need Abortion Access Fund

Network for Reproductive Options (NRO)
Nevada County Citizens for Choice
New Orleans Abortion Fund
NM Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Northland Family Planning Centers
Oregon Foundation for Reproductive Health
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Preterm
Pro-Choice Resources
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Religious Institute
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
Richmond Reproductive Freedom Project
Sexual Violence Center (Minnesota)
SisterReach
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
Society for Humanistic Judaism
SPARK Reproductive Justice Now
Susan Wicklund Fund Inc.
Texas Equal Access Fund
The CAIR Project
The Choice Fund of Fountain Street Church
The Freedom Fund
The Lilith Fund for Reproductive Equity
The Reproductive Health Access Project
The Sea Change Program
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association

Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

United We Dream

URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity

Virginia NOW

Voto Latino

West Virginia Free

Western States Center

Whitman-Walker Health

Women of Reform Judaism

Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)

Women's Emergency Network

Women's Health Specialists of California

Women's Medical Fund (PA)

Women's Medical Fund, Inc (WI)

Women's Reproductive Rights Assistance Project