

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 22, 2015

Mr. Shaun Donovan, Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Donovan:

As Members of Congress serving on the House Committee on the Budget and the House Committee on Appropriations committed to advancing reproductive health, rights, and justice, we appreciate the important steps the Administration has taken to improve the wellbeing of women and their families. Moreover, the actions you have taken in recent budget proposals to eliminate certain abortion restrictions have made it possible for us to take action through congressional policy. Building on this tradition of executive leadership is critically important to our work.

There is no doubt of the challenges we face going forward. Now is the time to be bold: we fully support the elimination of the Hyde Amendment and related abortion funding restrictions from the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget. These budget riders have a far-reaching impact on women enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare, federal employees and their dependents, Peace Corps Volunteers, Native American women, women in federal prisons, women in immigration detention centers and residents of the District of Columbia. Now, more than ever, your support in protecting and improving access to the full range of reproductive health care services is critical.


Withholding coverage for abortion care creates profound hardships for millions of women and families. This is particularly true for those who already face significant barriers to receiving high-quality health care, such as low-income women, immigrant women, young women, and women of color. While nearly one third of states provide some abortion coverage with state Medicaid dollars, data from the U.S. Census indicate that today, nearly half of Latinas and approximately 70 percent of Black women—and a majority of all women of color—live in states where Medicaid coverage of abortion care is denied in cases beyond those of life endangerment, rape, and incest.


For many women, coverage for abortion care means the difference between getting the health care they need and being denied that care. For example, approximately one in four Medicaid-eligible women who would have had an abortion if funds were available must carry the pregnancy to term because she is unable to afford the cost of that care, according to *Restrictions on Medicaid Funding for Abortion: A Literature Review* by the Guttmacher Institute. The impact of such a denial can have long term, devastating effects on a woman and her family's economic future. A recent study titled *Denial of Abortion Care Due to Gestational Age Limits* found that a woman who seeks but is denied abortion care is three times more likely to fall into poverty than a woman who is able to get the care she needs.

These policies have harmed our families, our communities, and our health for far too long. We strongly support eliminating all abortion coverage restrictions in your Fiscal Year 2016 Budget. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure all women have access to comprehensive reproductive health services.

Sincerely,


Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress


Gwen Moore
Member of Congress


Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress


Sam Farr
Member of Congress


Betty McCollum
Member of Congress


Steve Israel
Member of Congress


Kathy Castor
Member of Congress




José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress




Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress




Mike Honda
Member of Congress




Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress