

13. INDIVIDUAL MEMBER – FILED RESOLUTIONS:

13.1 Alderperson Brock - Resolution Supporting Adoption of the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH) Woman Act

WHEREAS, reproductive health is a vital component of a woman's overall health, and a woman's freedom to make reproductive decisions is vital to her safety, well-being, economic opportunity, and ability to participate equally in society; and

WHEREAS, women need access to safe, affordable, and comprehensive reproductive health care throughout their lives, including screening for cancer and sexually transmitted infections, contraceptive services, abortion care, prenatal care, and labor and delivery services; and

WHEREAS, on January 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a historic and landmark decision, ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that the U.S. Constitution safeguards a woman's ability to make her own personal medical decisions about when or whether to have children; and

WHEREAS, in the last 43 years, access to abortion care has allowed women to participate more fully in society, saved lives, and strengthened families; and

WHEREAS, the government, by partially or fully subsidizing health insurance and health care services for individuals who meet certain eligibility criteria, recognizes that health care is essential to protect an individual's ability to fully participate in her family, community, and society; and

WHEREAS, health insurance, whether private or government funded, should cover the full range of a woman's options when she is facing an unintended pregnancy, so that she is able to make the decision she deems best for her and her family without interference; and

WHEREAS, we must guard against efforts to deliberately erode the availability and affordability of abortion and undermine the protections provided by *Roe v. Wade*; and

WHEREAS, one such restriction is the Hyde Amendment, passed by Congress on September 30, 1976, which has for 40 years denied abortion coverage for low-income women enrolled in the Medicaid health insurance program, significantly impeding their ability to access abortion; and

WHEREAS, New York and many other states offer vital health care to fill the gap left by the federal Hyde Amendment by providing those enrolled in the state Medicaid plan with coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related services, including abortion; and

WHEREAS, many women in Ithaca, New York, including state and federal employees, Peace Corps members, and beneficiaries of Indian Health Services and military insurance programs, obtain insurance coverage through other public insurance programs that also include restrictions that withhold coverage for abortion; and

WHEREAS, September 30, 2016 marks the 40th year of the federal Hyde Amendment, which denies women use of Medicaid insurance for abortion and represents the nexus of deeply entrenched economic injustice, racism, and gender inequity; and

WHEREAS, the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH) Woman Act was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in July 2015; and

WHEREAS, the EACH Woman Act would expand coverage for abortion services to women currently denied by ensuring that every woman who receives care or insurance through the federal government will have coverage for abortion services; and by prohibiting political interference in private insurance coverage of abortion; and

WHEREAS, laws that restrict insurance coverage of abortion can create insurmountable obstacles to quality health care; and

WHEREAS, when health insurance coverage for abortion is restricted, the harm falls hardest on 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; and

WHEREAS, a woman who wants to get an abortion but is denied is more likely to fall into poverty than one who can get an abortion¹; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that funding of comprehensive reproductive health care be increased and that abortion be covered as part of comprehensive reproductive health care in all public insurance programs to ensure that services are accessible for women who are enrolled in such programs; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the City of Ithaca, New York calls upon Congress and President Obama to support and reinstate insurance coverage for abortion services for women enrolled in public insurance programs by enacting the EACH Woman Act; and, be it

Further **RESOLVED**, That this Resolution be sent to the Tompkins County Legislature and the individual municipalities in Tompkins County, in the hopes that similar Resolutions will be adopted by their legislative bodies.

¹ Reproductive Health Technologies Project (August 2015). Two Sides of the Same Coin: Integrating Economic and Reproductive Justice. Retrieved from <http://rhttp.org/abortion/documents/TwoSidesSameCoinReport.pdf>.