December 8, 2020

The Honorable Joe Biden
President-elect of the United States
[Transition Office]

Dear Mr. President-elect:

As organizations committed to ensuring all people can access reproductive health care, including abortion, no matter how much money they make, where they are born, or their race or gender, we believe that each of us should be able to make decisions about pregnancy and parenting that are best for our families without political interference. However, policymakers have enacted bans on insurance coverage of abortion that push this decision out of reach for many, particularly those struggling to make ends meet. We appreciate your past statements in support of ending the Hyde Amendment, and are ready to work with your new Administration towards making this shared goal a reality.

This is a crucial moment for Black and Brown communities, women, LGBTQ folks, immigrants, and young people. Our communities are still trying to survive a pandemic. In October, the Senate took swift action to ram through an anti-abortion Supreme Court nominee despite continued inaction on pandemic relief, as people marched around the country. We are fighting for a future in which we can control our own bodies and safely care for our families. We are reimagining a world in which each of us makes a living wage and everyone has access to the full-spectrum of reproductive health care, including abortion.

During your campaign you committed to repeal the Hyde amendment and affirmed that access to abortion care is not dependent on someone's income or zip code. We are asking you to show bold leadership and take a critical first step toward realizing this vision by eliminating the Hyde Amendment and related abortion coverage restrictions from your Fiscal Year 2022 budget. Such restrictions on coverage have a far-reaching impact on people enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare; federal employees and their dependents; Peace Corps Volunteers; Native Americans; women in federal prisons and immigration detention centers; and residents of the District of Columbia. This includes the Weldon Amendment, which has been attached to Hyde and used to threaten states that seek to ensure abortion coverage.

Access to reproductive health care services, including abortion, is crucial for justice and economic security and should not be contingent on a person’s income, insurance coverage, immigration status, or where they live. 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 people, immigrants, young people, women of color, and transgender and gender nonconforming people.

For many, insurance coverage for abortion care means the difference between getting the
health care they need and being denied that care. Approximately one in four Medicaid-eligible women who would have had an abortion if funds were available must carry the pregnancy to term because they are unable to afford the cost of that care.\(^1\) A counselor at a health center recounted, “There are certainly women who have an unwanted pregnancy, and wish to terminate, and don’t have the funds to. They may, out of necessity, continue the pregnancy because they don’t even have $340 dollars to do the termination.”\(^2\) A recent study found out of pocket costs for second trimester abortion would be catastrophic for households earning state’s median monthly income in all 50 states and D.C.\(^3\) The impact of abortion coverage bans can have long-term effects on a family’s economic future.

Reproductive health care— including abortion – has never been more seriously under attack. In 2019 alone, 12 states enacted 25 abortion bans, many of which would ban abortion before a person may know they are pregnant.\(^4\) Multiple states exploited the coronavirus pandemic to try to ban abortion and cut patients off from care. The pandemic exposed the long-standing structural racism and inequities in our healthcare system, with communities of color, particularly those in the Black, Latinx, and Pacific Islander communities, and Indigenous people facing disproportionately high rates of infection and death from COVID-19. We know that same systemic racism is at the core of abortion coverage bans like the Hyde amendment and disproportionately impacts the same communities as the pandemic.

Over the past 10 years, a movement led by Millennials, communities of color, and reproductive and economic justice advocates, rose up calling for the end of these obstacles to abortion care. In 2015, members of the House of Representatives, led by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA13), joined this movement and took a significant step forward by introducing the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act (H.R. 1692) – bold legislation to end the Hyde Amendment and related abortion coverage restrictions. Senators Duckworth, Hirono, Harris, and Murray made history in 2019 when they introduced the EACH Woman Act in the Senate (S. 758). With the EACH Woman Act, politicians will no longer be able to deny a woman abortion coverage based on her income, type of insurance, or zip code.

Not only does this legislation have a historical level of support, but it also has the support of the American people. Battleground polling released in September 2019 shows that 69% of voters agree that someone enrolled in Medicaid should have all of their pregnancy-related health care covered by their insurance, including abortion services. It also shows that the proportion of voters who strongly favor Medicaid coverage of abortion services has increased 7 points since 2017, from 31% to 38% nationally.\(^5\)

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\(^5\) New polling shows that a significant majority of the American electorate supports Medicaid coverage of abortion services; support in battleground congressional districts is even stronger. [https://allaboveall.org/press/national-poll-shows-tide-is-turning-on-43-years-of-restricting-abortion-coverage/](https://allaboveall.org/press/national-poll-shows-tide-is-turning-on-43-years-of-restricting-abortion-coverage/)
In your words, “If I believe health care is a right, as I do, I can no longer support an amendment that makes that right dependent on someone’s ZIP code”.\(^6\) We urge you to begin your presidency with a clear statement that discriminatory abortion coverage bans have no place in our public policy by eliminating all such restrictions from your FY 2022 budget. This will send a strong message of leadership to Congress and the country that everyone should be able to decide when and how to start a family— however much money they make, the type of insurance they have, or where they live.

Sincerely,

#VOTEPROCHOICE
9to5
Abortion Care Network
Abortion Clinics Online
Access Reproductive Care (ARC)-Southeast
ACCESS Women's Health Justice
Advocates for Youth
African American Ministers In Action
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families
AIDS Foundation Chicago
AIDS United
Alexa's Birth Services
All* Above All
All-Options
Allentown Women's Center
American Atheists
American Civil Liberties Union
American Family Voices
American Humanist Association
APLA Health
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Avodah
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Black Women's Health Imperative
Bold Futures NM
California Nurse-Midwives Association
Camelback Family Planning
Carolina Jews for Justice
Cascade AIDS Project
Catholics for Choice
Cedar River Clinics
Center for American Progress
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

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\(^6\) Joe Biden Denounces Hyde Amendment, Reversing His Position. 
Center for Reproductive Rights
CHANGE (Center for Health and Gender Equity)
Chicago Abortion Fund
CHOICES. Memphis Center for Reproductive Health
Civil Liberties and Public Policy
Cobalt Advocates
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity & Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Commission on the Public's Health System
Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund
EMAA Project
Equality California
Equality North Carolina
Feminist Humanist Alliance
Feminist Women's Health Center
Florida Health Justice Project
Forward Together Action
Freedom From Religion Foundation
Gender Justice
Global Justice Center
Guttmacher Institute
Habonim Dror North America
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
HANA Center
Health Law Advocates, Inc.
Holler Health Justice
Hope Clinic for Women
Ibis Reproductive Health
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Indivisible
Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Justice (IVRJ)
Ipas
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Jane's Due Process
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Jewish Women International
Jobs With Justice
Just The Pill
Kentucky Health Justice Network
Keshet
Lanai Community Health Center
Lawyering Project
Lilith Fund
LOOM
Mabel Wadsworth Center
Medical Students for Choice
Mississippi Center for Justice
MomsRising
NAKASEC Virginia
NARAL Pro-Choice America
NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina
NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon
National Abortion Federation
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Jewish Women Los Angeles
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National Immigration Law Center
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Organization of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
National Working Positive Coalition
New Orleans Abortion Fund
New Voices for Reproductive Justice
New York Abortion Access Fund
New York Legal Assistance Group
NM Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Northwest Abortion Access Fund
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Nurses for Sexual and Reproductive Health
One Fair Wage
Options Fund
PAI
People For the American Way
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Institute
Positive Women's Network-USA
Power to Decide
Progress Florida
Public Justice Center
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Reproductive Health Access Project
Silver State Equality-Nevada
SisterReach
SisterSong: Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
Society for Humanistic Judaism
Southwest Women's Law Center
SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW!, inc.
T'ruah
Texas Equal Access Fund
The Greenlining Institute
The Praxis Project
The Women's Center
The Womxn Project
Treatment Action Group
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of York
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation
United We Dream
Universal Health Care Action Network (UHCAN)
University of Louisville Medical Students For Choice
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
We Testify
Western States Center
Women of Reform Judaism
Women With A Vision, Inc.
Women's Health Center of West Virginia
Women's Health Specialists
Women's Law Project
Women's Medical Fund, Inc. (WI)
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network
Women’s Health Services
WV FREE
Yellowhammer Fund
Young Invincibles