

July 10th, 2017

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Mike Quigley  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Quigley:

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 2018 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. In this Congress, we have seen a renewed attack on abortion coverage in both the House and Senate plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act. These provisions are a cruel attempt to end private insurance coverage of abortion care. We must end the legacy of the Hyde amendment and its never ending burden on low income women.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 Health Insurance (EACH) Woman Act (H.R. 771). The EACH Woman Act was introduced in the House by Congresswoman Barbara Lee in January of 2017 and now has a total of 120 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,

Abortion Care Network  
Advocates for Youth  
All-Options  
Allentown Women's Center  
Alliance for Justice  
American Civil Liberties Union  
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO)  
Catholics for Choice  
Center for Community Change Action  
Center for Reproductive Rights  
Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program  
Emergency Medical Assistance  
Feminist Majority Foundation

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<sup>1</sup> 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>.

<sup>2</sup> 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>

Forward Together  
Human Rights Campaign  
Ibis Reproductive Health  
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda  
Ipas  
Lady Parts Justice League  
League of United Latin American Citizens.  
Mabel Wadsworth Center  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina  
NARAL Pro-Choice Texas  
National Abortion Federation  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Council of Jewish Women  
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 Women's Health Network  
National Women's Law Center  
New Voices for Reproductive Justice  
Nursing Students for Sexual and Reproductive Health  
Oregon Foundation for Reproductive Health  
People for the American Way  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Pro-Choice Resources  
Religious Institute  
Reproductive Health Access Project  
Restaurant Opportunities Centers United  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)

SisterReach

Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation

URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity

Voto Latino

Western States Center

Women's Media Center

Women's Medical Fund

Women's Reproductive Rights Assistance Project (WRRAP)

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