

December 9, 2011

Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate

Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Honorable Norm Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Senate and House Leadership and Appropriations Committee Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We strongly urge you to support women's reproductive health programs in the Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12) appropriations process and reject the proposed policy riders and funding cuts that would limit access to and information about critical women's health services. Once again, certain members are choosing to use the appropriations process to promote an agenda that is harmful to women's health. At a time when the census reveals a record number of women are living in poverty, and considering that half of all pregnancies are unplanned, we should be investing in and expanding women's comprehensive health care, not cutting off access to critical services.

Several proposals in the House of Representatives would limit access to critical women's health services. These dangerous riders and cuts include:

- The elimination of federal funding for preventive and primary care services provided by Planned Parenthood affiliates;
- The elimination of funding for the Title X family planning program;
- The elimination of existing language providing strong evidence standards for teen pregnancy prevention funding;
- The reinstatement of the "Global Gag Rule" on foreign aid;
- A prohibition on contributions to the United Nations Population Fund;

- A ban on local funding of virtually all abortion services in the District of Columbia;
- A ban on insurance coverage of virtually all abortion services for federal employees;
- The potential elimination of abortion coverage in plans sold through health insurance exchanges created under the Affordable Care Act;
- A broad expansion of current refusal law with potentially significant implications for women's health.

Ultimately, women will pay the price for the continual efforts to advance an ideological agenda through the appropriations process. We applaud the 108 members who signed on to the recent letter opposing any language jeopardizing women's health in upcoming federal funding legislation, stating:

Since the 112th Congress began, too much of the legislative calendar has been consumed with attacks on women's health rather than the American people's desire for jobs and a solution to this recession. We cannot allow brinksmanship to substitute for sound policy judgment again this year.

We urge you to reject any attacks on women's health in the final FY12 appropriations process and call on Congress to preserve and expand crucial women's reproductive health care programs. Women rely on these programs now more than ever. Investing in preventive and primary women's health care will improve the economic security of women and their families and will help to grow our economy.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
 AIDS United
 American Association of University Women (AAUW)
 American Civil Liberties Union
 American College of Nurse-Midwives
 American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
 American Medical Student Association
 American Medical Women's Association
 American Social Health Association
 American Society for Reproductive Medicine
 Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
 Black Women's Health Imperative
 Catholics for Choice
 Childbirth Connection
 Medical Students for Choice
 NARAL Pro-Choice America
 National Abortion Federation
 National Council of Jewish Women
 National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association

National Health Law Program
National Latina Health Network
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health Care
National Organization of Women
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
People For the American Way
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Action International
Population Connection
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
Wider Opportunities for Women
Women of Reform Judaism
YWCA USA