

ACTION BRIEF

The Affordable Care Act and Reproductive Health



In the 115th Congress, lawmakers are advocating for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) without a clear replacement. Thanks to the ACA, approximately 9.5 million women who were previously uninsured have gained health coverage and 55 million women now have access to birth control and vital preventive care without copays or deductibles.² These services include: annual exams, screening for sexually transmitted infections, contraception, and counseling for domestic and intimate partner violence. For the first time, the ACA made it illegal for federally funded health insurance providers to discriminate based on sex, race, national origin, and ability.

Instead of repealing the ACA, we need to improve it. For example, the EACH Woman Act would:

- Ensure that women who receive insurance through the federal government, are also entitled to coverage for abortion services.
- Require federal health insurance programs, including Medicaid, Medicare, and CHIP to provide coverage for abortion services.
- Block state and local governments from restricting abortion coverage using private health insurance plans.
- Reverse the Hyde Amendment and related abortion funding restrictions.

Strong pushback from constituents, particularly at recent town halls and demonstrations across the country, underscore the necessity of the ACA. Women across the country are also extremely energized, mobilized, and watching their representatives. In fact, according to the Pew Research Center, public support for legal abortion is now as high as it's been in two decades of polling: "about six-in-ten U.S. adults (59%) say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, compared with 37% who say it should be illegal all or most of the time." Furthermore, with regards to the Supreme Court's landmark 1973 ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, about seven-in-ten Americans (69%) say it should not be completely overturned.

As such, legislators must:

- Oppose any measure to repeal the ACA unless its replacement retains existing protections against pre-existing conditions, lifetime coverage caps, and gender-based discrimination, and adds improvements such as including a public option in states without sufficient market competition from private insurers.
- Support improvements to affordable health care overall, for example with the EACH Woman Act.

Legislators represent all of their constituents, and we will do all we can to hold them accountable for stances that do not reflect constituent interests, especially when those stances limit access to affordable healthcare.

Sources

- ¹ Woolhandler, Steffie and David Himmelstein, "[Repealing Obamacare Will Kill More than 43,000 People a Year.](#)" *Chicagotribune.com*. Chicago Tribune, 24 Jan. 2017. Web. 24 Feb. 2017.
- ² Taylor, Jamila. "[How Women Would Be Hurt by ACA Repeal and Defunding of Planned Parenthood.](#)" *Center for American Progress*. N.p., 17 Jan. 2017. Web. 24 Feb. 2017.
- ³ "[Birth Control Benefits.](#)" *Healthcare.gov*. N.p., n.d. Web.
- ⁴ Burns, Janet. "[Birth-Control Repeal May Cost Women \\$1.4B A Year In Copays \(For Starters\)](#)", *Forbes.com*, N.p., 17 Jan. 2017, Web. 24 Feb.