

ACTION ALERT: Urge Your Representative to Co-Sponsor the EACH Woman Act!

July 22, 2015

Too often low-income women, and disproportionately women of color, as well as immigrant women and young women do not have access to safe and legal abortions because of their reduced ability to pay. Since 1976, the **Hyde Amendment** has had a harmful impact on women by prohibiting the use of federal funds under Medicaid to pay for abortion care, except in cases of rape, incest or a severe life or health endangerment. Some states do permit use of **state** Medicaid matching funds to pay for abortion care, but at least 32 states do not.

Hyde Amendment Causes Health and Poverty Risks - This denial of a safe and common health care procedure causes unnecessary health risks and an added financial burden for women needing abortion care. A woman's ability to decide when and whether to become a parent should not hinge upon whether her income is above a certain threshold. The Hyde Amendment ultimately results in women waiting for care while they raise funds, forcing them to postpone their abortions until later in their pregnancies when the costs and health risks are greater.

According to a 2008 Guttmacher Institute study, 42 percent of women seeking abortions were poor and 60 percent of abortions were paid for out-of-pocket. The National Abortion Federation says it receives 5,000 calls per week from women who are desperate to make the best decision for themselves and their families, yet many are not able to afford abortion care.

Millions of Women Affected - The long list of women affected by the Hyde Amendment includes not only the one in six women who are enrolled in Medicaid, but also federal employees, women in the military and their dependents, women in federal prisons as well as women who live in the 25 states which prohibit private insurance plans' coverage of abortion care, including those obtained through the health insurance marketplaces of the Affordable Care Act.

The **EACH Woman Act** effectively repeals the **Hyde Amendment** and allows for recipients of Medicaid, Medicare and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to have access to the full range of reproductive health care options. In addition, the EACH Woman Act would require the federal government as an insurer, employer or health care provider to assure affordable abortion coverage and care for every woman. It would also prohibit state and local governments from restricting or prohibiting abortion care by private insurance plans.

The EACH Woman Act will stop the Hyde Amendment from unfairly jeopardizing the health and well-being of low-income women and their families and will ensure insurance coverage for abortion care in both public and private insurance plans.

On July 8, the **EACH Woman Act (H.R. 2972)** was introduced by Reps. Barbara Lee (D-CA), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), and Diana DeGette (D-CO) with nearly 90 co-sponsors and immediately began garnering national attention.

The **EACH Woman Act** would:

- Repeal political interference by state legislatures in the decisions by private insurers to offer reproductive health coverage.
- Ensure coverage for abortion care in public health insurance programs including Medicaid, Medicare, and the Children's Health Insurance Program.
- Ensure abortion care is made available to individuals who are eligible to receive services in the federal government's own facilities or in facilities with which it contracts to provide medical care.

Call, e-mail, or schedule a meeting with your representative and ask her/him to co-sponsor, support, and vote for the EACH Woman Act of 2015. The main number for Congress is (202)- 225-3121 and a directory of House member's office numbers is <http://www.house.gov/representatives/>

Tell them: "It is time to ensure access to safe and legal abortion services for *every* woman. Support the **EACH Woman Act of 2015.**"

Thank you for taking time and taking action.