

Attachment: Copy of Letter

December 21, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As organizations committed to advancing women's reproductive health, rights, and justice, we appreciate the important steps your administration has taken to protect and expand access to comprehensive reproductive health care. We look forward to continuing to work with you to halt the ongoing, significant efforts to restrict women's access to comprehensive health care and to instead ensure affordable access to health care that includes abortion services. We request that you support women's reproductive health in Fiscal Year 2014 by omitting all language from your budget request that would restrict coverage for abortion care.

We believe that all women – whether they have public or private health insurance – should have access to abortion coverage so that they can make personal health decisions based on what is best for them and their families. But since the passage of the Hyde Amendment in 1976, Congress has withheld health care assistance for abortion services in publicly-funded health insurance. These policies create unjust obstacles to care for federal employees and those who already face significant barriers to receiving high-quality care, such as low-income women, immigrant women and women of color.

We strongly urge you to strike or not include language in your FY14 budget that restricts funding for abortion care and coverage for: (i) Medicaid-eligible women and Medicare 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) use by the District of Columbia of its own funds for abortion coverage for low-income women.

In addition, we look forward to you taking quick action on the request to work with the relevant federal agencies to reinterpret the Helms Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, which prohibits foreign aid for abortion “as a method of family planning.” This provision has been interpreted as a total ban on abortion, despite the current legal and political consensus that supports bringing this policy into line with the Hyde Amendment so that funds may be used to save a woman's life and to help women who become pregnant from rape or incest.

However, it is also crucial that the administration's budget signal to Congress your commitment to opposing all abortion coverage restrictions, which harm women's health and erect unnecessary and unfair barriers to care.

We believe that all women should have affordable and comprehensive health care that includes coverage for the cost of abortion, however they get their health insurance. We look forward to working with you on this and other issues related to women's reproductive health care and rights over the coming year.

Sincerely,

ACCESS Women's Health Justice
Advocates for Women
Advocates for Youth
AIDS United
American Civil Liberties Union
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Black Women's Health Imperative
California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
Catholics for Choice
Center for American Progress Action Fund
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)
Center for Reproductive Rights
Choice USA
Citizens for Choice
Civil Liberties and Public Policy
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Community to Community Development
D.C. Chapter, National Organization for Women
DC Abortion Fund
Forward Together
Freedom Fund, Inc.
Guttmacher Institute
Healthy Kinder, Inc.
Ibis Reproductive Health
Ipas
Jewish Women International
Law Students for Reproductive Justice
Legal Momentum
Legal Voice
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Ms. Foundation for Women
NARAL Pro-Choice America

National Abortion Federation
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Health Law Program
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Minority AIDS Council
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women (NOW)
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Physicians for Reproductive Choice & Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Pro-Choice Resources
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Reproductive Health Access Project
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
Stigma Relief Fund
The American Medical Student Association
The Carolina Abortion Fund
The Freedom Fund of Denver, CO
The New York Abortion Access Fund
The Southwest Women's Law Center
The Texas Equal Access Fund
Ultraviolet
Union of Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
WA State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Women Have Options
Women of Reform Judaism
Women's Medical Fund, Southeastern PA
Women's Reproductive Rights Assistance Project
WV FREE