

December 8, 2020

The Honorable Joe Biden  
President-elect of the United States  
[Transition Office]

Dear Mr. President-elect:

As organizations committed to ensuring all people can access reproductive health care, including abortion, no matter how much money they make, where they are born, or their race or gender, we believe that each of us should be able to make decisions about pregnancy and parenting that are best for our families without political interference. However, policymakers have enacted bans on insurance coverage of abortion that push this decision out of reach for many, particularly those struggling to make ends meet. We appreciate your past statements in support of ending the Hyde Amendment, and are ready to work with your new Administration towards making this shared goal a reality.

This is a crucial moment for Black and Brown communities, women, LGBTQ folks, immigrants, and young people. Our communities are still trying to survive a pandemic. In October, the Senate took swift action to ram through an anti-abortion Supreme Court nominee despite continued inaction on pandemic relief, as people marched around the country. We are fighting for a future in which we can control our own bodies and safely care for our families. We are reimagining a world in which each of us makes a living wage and everyone has access to the full-spectrum of reproductive health care, including abortion.

During your campaign you [committed](#) to repeal the Hyde amendment and affirmed that access to abortion care is not dependent on someone's income or zip code. **We are asking you to show bold leadership and take a critical first step toward realizing this vision by eliminating the Hyde Amendment and related abortion coverage restrictions from your Fiscal Year 2022 budget.** Such restrictions on coverage have a far-reaching impact on people enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare; federal employees and their dependents; Peace Corps Volunteers; Native Americans; women in federal prisons and immigration detention centers; and residents of the District of Columbia. This includes the Weldon Amendment, which has been attached to Hyde and used to threaten states that seek to ensure abortion coverage.

Access to reproductive health care services, including abortion, is crucial for justice and economic security and should not be contingent on a person's income, insurance coverage, immigration status, or where they live. 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 people, immigrants, young people, women of color, and transgender and gender nonconforming people.

For many, insurance coverage for abortion care means the difference between getting the

health care they need and being denied that care. Approximately one in four Medicaid-eligible women who would have had an abortion if funds were available must carry the pregnancy to term because they are unable to afford the cost of that care.<sup>1</sup> A counselor at a health center recounted, “There are certainly women who have an unwanted pregnancy, and wish to terminate, and don’t have the funds to. They may, out of necessity, continue the pregnancy because they don’t even have \$340 dollars to do the termination.”<sup>2</sup> A recent study found out of pocket costs for second trimester abortion would be catastrophic for households earning state’s median monthly income in all 50 states and D.C.<sup>3</sup> The impact of abortion coverage bans can have long-term effects on a family’s economic future.

Reproductive health care— including abortion – has never been more seriously under attack. In 2019 alone, 12 states enacted 25 abortion bans, many of which would ban abortion before a person may know they are pregnant.<sup>4</sup> Multiple states exploited the coronavirus pandemic to try to ban abortion and cut patients off from care. The pandemic exposed the long-standing structural racism and inequities in our healthcare system, with communities of color, particularly those in the Black, Latinx, and Pacific Islander communities, and Indigenous people facing disproportionately high rates of infection and death from COVID-19. We know that same systemic racism is at the core of abortion coverage bans like the Hyde amendment and disproportionately impacts the same communities as the pandemic.

Over the past 10 years, a movement led by Millennials, communities of color, and reproductive and economic justice advocates, rose up calling for the end of these obstacles to abortion care. In 2015, members of the House of Representatives, led by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA13), joined this movement and took a significant step forward by introducing the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act (H.R. 1692) – bold legislation to end the Hyde Amendment and related abortion coverage restrictions. Senators Duckworth, Hirono, Harris, and Murray made history in 2019 when they introduced the EACH Woman Act in the Senate (S. 758). With the EACH Woman Act, politicians will no longer be able to deny a woman abortion coverage based on her income, type of insurance, or zip code.

Not only does this legislation have a historical level of support, but it also has the support of the American people. Battleground polling released in September 2019 shows that 69% of voters agree that someone enrolled in Medicaid should have all of their pregnancy-related health care covered by their insurance, including abortion services. It also shows that the proportion of voters who strongly favor Medicaid coverage of abortion services has increased 7 points since 2017, from 31% to 38% nationally.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Henshaw, S.K., Joyce T., Dennis, A., Finer, L.B., and Blanchard, K. “Restrictions on Medicaid Funding for Abortions: A Literature Review.” Guttmacher Institute. Jul 2009. Available at <http://bit.ly/2dh6DIY>

<sup>2</sup> “Research Brief: The Impact Of Medicaid Coverage Restrictions on Abortion”. Ibis Reproductive Health and All\* Above All. August 2014. Available at <http://bit.ly/2eesf9H>

<sup>3</sup> Zuniga, C., Thompson, T., Blanchard, K. (2020) Abortion as a Catastrophic Health Expenditure in the United States. Women’s Health Issues. Retrieved from: [https://www.whijournal.com/article/S1049-3867\(20\)30066-9/fulltext](https://www.whijournal.com/article/S1049-3867(20)30066-9/fulltext)

<sup>4</sup> Nash, E., Mohammed, L., Cappello, E., Naide, O. (2019). State Policy Trends 2019: A Wave of Abortion Bans, But Some States Are Fighting Back. Guttmacher Institute. Retrieved from: <https://www.guttmacher.org/article/2019/12/state-policy-trends-2019-wave-abortion-bans-some-states-are-fighting-back>

<sup>5</sup> New polling shows that a significant majority of the American electorate supports Medicaid coverage of abortion services; support in battleground congressional districts is even stronger. <https://allaboveall.org/press/national-poll-shows-tide-is-turning-on-43-years-of-restricting-abortion-coverage/>

In your words, “If I believe health care is a right, as I do, I can no longer support an amendment that makes that right dependent on someone’s ZIP code”.<sup>6</sup> We urge you to begin your presidency with a clear statement that discriminatory abortion coverage bans have no place in our public policy by eliminating all such restrictions from your FY 2022 budget. This will send a strong message of leadership to Congress and the country that everyone should be able to decide when and how to start a family— however much money they make, the type of insurance they have, or where they live.

Sincerely,

#VOTEPROCHOICE

9to5

Abortion Care Network

Abortion Clinics Online

Access Reproductive Care (ARC)-Southeast

ACCESS Women's Health Justice

Advocates for Youth

African American Ministers In Action

AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families

AIDS Foundation Chicago

AIDS United

Alexa's Birth Services

All\* Above All

All-Options

Allentown Women's Center

American Atheists

American Civil Liberties Union

American Family Voices

American Humanist Association

APLA Health

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO

Avodah

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

Black Women's Health Imperative

Bold Futures NM

California Nurse-Midwives Association

Camelback Family Planning

Carolina Jews for Justice

Cascade AIDS Project

Catholics for Choice

Cedar River Clinics

Center for American Progress

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies

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<sup>6</sup> Joe Biden Denounces Hyde Amendment, Reversing His Position.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/06/us/politics/joe-biden-hyde-amendment.html>

Center for Reproductive Rights  
CHANGE (Center for Health and Gender Equity)  
Chicago Abortion Fund  
CHOICES. Memphis Center for Reproductive Health  
Civil Liberties and Public Policy  
Cobalt Advocates  
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity & Reproductive Rights (COLOR)  
Commission on the Public's Health System  
Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund  
EMAA Project  
Equality California  
Equality North Carolina  
Feminist Humanist Alliance  
Feminist Women's Health Center  
Florida Health Justice Project  
Forward Together Action  
Freedom From Religion Foundation  
Gender Justice  
Global Justice Center  
Guttmacher Institute  
Habonim Dror North America  
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.  
HANA Center  
Health Law Advocates, Inc.  
Holler Health Justice  
Hope Clinic for Women  
Ibis Reproductive Health  
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice  
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda  
Indivisible  
Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Justice (IVRJ)  
Ipas  
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health  
Jane's Due Process  
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action  
Jewish Women International  
Jobs With Justice  
Just The Pill  
Kentucky Health Justice Network  
Keshet  
Lanai Community Health Center  
Lawyering Project  
Lilith Fund  
LOOM  
Mabel Wadsworth Center  
Medical Students for Choice

Mississippi Center for Justice  
MomsRising  
NAKASEC Virginia  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina  
NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon  
National Abortion Federation  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Black Women's HIV/AIDS Network  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council of Jewish Women Los Angeles  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Health Law Program  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Institute for Reproductive Health  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice  
National Network of Abortion Funds  
National Organization for Women  
National Organization of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Health Network  
National Women's Law Center  
National Working Positive Coalition  
New Orleans Abortion Fund  
New Voices for Reproductive Justice  
New York Abortion Access Fund  
New York Legal Assistance Group  
NM Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Northwest Abortion Access Fund  
Northwest Health Law Advocates  
Nurses for Sexual and Reproductive Health  
One Fair Wage  
Options Fund  
PAI  
People For the American Way  
Physicians for Reproductive Health  
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Population Institute  
Positive Women's Network-USA  
Power to Decide  
Progress Florida  
Public Justice Center  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Reproductive Health Access Project

Silver State Equality-Nevada  
SisterReach  
SisterSong: Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective  
Society for Humanistic Judaism  
Southwest Women's Law Center  
SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW!, inc.  
T'ruah  
Texas Equal Access Fund  
The Greenlining Institute  
The Praxis Project  
The Women's Center  
The Womxn Project  
Treatment Action Group  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of York  
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation  
United We Dream  
Universal Health Care Action Network (UHCAN)  
University of Louisville Medical Students For Choice  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
We Testify  
Western States Center  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Women With A Vision, Inc.  
Women's Health Center of West Virginia  
Women's Health Specialists  
Women's Law Project  
Women's Medical Fund, Inc. (WI)  
Women's Rights and Empowerment Network  
Women's Health Services  
WV FREE  
Yellowhammer Fund  
Young Invincibles