

20 American Jewish Organizations & Communities Support the EACH Woman Act to End Bans on Abortion Coverage

October 22, 2015

US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Member of Congress:

The undersigned US Jewish organizations and communities are committed to supporting access to affordable health coverage for all, including abortion, regardless of income, race, age, or any other factor. Inspired by the values that unite us as members of the Jewish community, we stand together and urge you to support the **Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act**, HR 2972.

As Jews, we believe that each of us is inherently of equal worth. We are all equally deserving of access to services that enable us to get the health care we need, without jeopardizing our financial future or foregoing other human needs like housing or food. As Jewish Americans, we believe in our nation's bedrock democratic value of religious freedom. This founding principle affirms each person's right to make their own personal decisions about their health and body, according to their own religious, moral, or ethical beliefs and circumstances and without political interference.

But too many women in our communities are currently denied affordable abortion care due to bans on abortion coverage, like the Hyde Amendment (Hyde). Since Congress first approved Hyde in 1976, lawmakers have expanded its reach. Today, it withholds comprehensive coverage of abortion from women and dependents enrolled in Medicaid and other federal health plans and programs, restricting abortion just because a woman is poor or due to her source of insurance.

We are all the more appalled by Hyde and similar bans when we consider who is hurt. Such bans fall hardest on individuals struggling to make ends meet and who face other systemic barriers to obtaining health care information and services — disproportionately harming women of color, immigrant women, and young people. Medicaid bans have been shown to force one in four women seeking abortion to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term. These restrictions risk pushing a woman and her family deeper into poverty if she cannot access the care she seeks. Further, abortion bans jeopardize her ability to obtain safe medical care.

The EACH Woman Act, HR 2972, would end bans on abortion coverage, restoring respect for each woman's moral agency, ensuring fair treatment no matter her income, and protecting her health and safety. It would guarantee that every person who receives care or insurance through a federal plan or program will have coverage for abortion; further, it would prohibit political interference in the private insurance market, banning local, state, and federal lawmakers from preventing private insurance companies from offering abortion coverage (including in the health insurance marketplace).

Bans on abortion coverage go against our values and the freedoms we cherish as American Jewish institutions. Each individual must be guaranteed fair treatment in exercising their constitutional right to access abortion, regardless of their income, type of insurance, or where they live. Ensuring this access to care is critical to uphold a woman's religious liberty — her ability to make her own personal decisions surrounding a pregnancy. However we each may feel about abortion, it is unjust for Congress to push abortion out of reach from a woman just because she is poor or due to the insurance she holds, and privileging the religious views of those who oppose abortion.

We urge you to cosponsor and advance the EACH Woman Act, critical legislation that puts each woman's personal decisions about her body, health, and future back in her hands, where it belongs.

Sincerely,

National Jewish Organizations & Communities

1. Ameinu (Our People)
2. Association of Humanistic Rabbis
3. Bend the Arc Jewish Action
4. Central Conference of American Rabbis
5. Habonim Dror North America
6. Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
7. Jewish Labor Committee
8. Jewish Women International
9. National Council of Jewish Women
10. Rabbinical Assembly
11. Reconstructionist Rabbinical College/Jewish Reconstructionist Communities
12. Society for Humanistic Judaism
13. Union for Reform Judaism
14. Women of Reform Judaism
15. Women's League for Conservative Judaism
16. Workmen's Circle

State and Local Jewish Organizations & Communities

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| 17. Jewish Community Action | St. Paul, MN |
| 18. Jewish Community Relations Council, Milwaukee | Milwaukee, WI |
| 19. Jews for Racial & Economic Justice | New York, NY |
| 20. New England Jewish Labor Committee | Boston, MA |

For further information, please contact Amy Cotton, Senior Policy Manager, National Council of Jewish Women, amy@ncjwdc.org or 202 375 5067.