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SCHAKOWSKY CALLS H.R. 4691
LATEST ATTEMPT TO RESTRICT
A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The so-called "Abortion Non-Discrimination Act," H.R. 4691, is yet another attempt to restrict a woman's right to choose, including her right to information and services regarding her reproductive health. And like other anti-choice bills we've had before this body, this bill not only threatens to chip away at Roe v. Wade, it endangers women's health and their lives.

H.R. 4691 would allow an HMO or health-insurance company to decide for any reason whatsoever that it will no longer pay for, provide information, or make referrals for abortion services, even if the woman's life is endanger or she is a victim of rape or incest. In rural areas, there may only be one option. A woman is denied that opportunity to have full health services available to her. Because what this bill really does is allow any health care entity to ignore all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to abortion services, information, and referrals.

This bill is not a "conscience clause," as some would like to call it, as if HMOs could have a conscience. In fact, no federal laws currently exist that require any individual or hospital to provide abortions. But this bill would restrict a doctor's right if he believes it is his responsibility to provide these services. Women in this country need to be able to trust that when they go to a doctor with a problem or condition that they will be given all the information necessary to make informed decisions. This bill is a gag clause.

Informed consent is a valued and expected component of our health care system. So why do we think that, when it comes to women's health, it's okay to throw this concept out the window? To say that any health care provider, HMO, insurance company has the right to restrict information to women about their reproductive health for any reason whatsoever? This is simply unacceptable.