

Letter to Boehner condemns Republican bill that attacks Planned Parenthood

WASHINGTON, DC (February 11, 2011) – Today Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), an active leader in the Pro-Choice Caucus, sent a letter to Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) detailing concerns over Republican legislation, HR 217, the Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act. Schakowsky's letter was co-signed by 99 additional Democrats, including the Co-Chairs of the Pro-Choice Caucus: Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY).

The Republicans' Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act, introduced by Rep. Mike Pence (R-TX), would prove destructive to American women and their families by dismantling the nation's network of family-planning health clinics. The legislation would eliminate Title X funding, which is the only federal program exclusively dedicated to providing comprehensive family planning and related preventive health and reproductive services.

“This bill is not about federal funding because, unfortunately, federal funds are already prohibited from being used for abortions under the Hyde Amendment – at the expense of poor women, federal employees, and military women,” said **Rep. Jan Schakowsky**. “This is about Republicans’ aim to force the government into the private life decisions that American women make along with their doctors. Not only is the Republicans’ extreme legislation way out of the mainstream, it makes clear their disregard for women with limited access to reproductive health care, particularly those with minimal incomes. I call on Speaker Boehner to stop pandering to the conservative fringe, to respect American women, their choices and their families, and to set his party straight on our most pressing task: job creation.”

HR 217 targets Planned Parenthood, in particular, which is the largest provider of the full array of reproductive health services. For sixty percent of women who get care from clinics like Planned Parenthood, it is their main source of health care.

“The American people need for this Congress’ first priority to be getting people back to work, not wasting time and resources restricting a woman’s access to important health care services,” said **Rep. Diana DeGette**. “The clinics, whose funding the Republican leadership is trying to slash, are relied upon by women in communities across the country for even their most

basic health care needs, including screening for cancer, life-saving immunizations, and critical testing and treatment. This bill ignores the millions of women who rely on these clinics for health care and is yet another assault on women's rights that is simply too extreme."

Title X funding is a vital component of the health care safety net and has been responsible for improving the quality of women's health and lives, as well as reducing the rates of unintended births and abortions.

"Yet again the Republicans are not focused on creating any new jobs," said **Rep. Louise Slaughter**

"Instead, they are fast-tracking legislation to dismantle women's rights. This is yet another chapter in their playbook to roll back the rights of women.

If they were serious about reducing the number of abortions in this country, the methodology is clear – empower women to prevent unintended pregnancies through education and access to contraception. For every dollar spent on family planning services, it is estimated that almost four dollars is saved in public health spending. This comprehensive approach to protecting women's reproductive health will not only decrease the spread of STDs and reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies, but save money.

Instead they're doing everything they can to deny women the ability to decide how and when to start a family.

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Letter to Speaker John Boehner:

February 11, 2011

Dear Speaker Boehner:

We are writing to strongly oppose efforts designed to undermine women's access to basic, preventive health care and the women's health providers they rely on in their communities. In particular, we are deeply concerned about the impact that H.R. 217, the "Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act" would have on American women and their families.

H.R. 217 is squarely aimed at Planned Parenthood health centers, which serve 3 million Americans every year—providing life-saving cancer screenings, routine gynecological examinations, contraceptive services, immunizations, and STI testing and treatment. For more than 90 years, Planned Parenthood's doctors and nurses have served as a critical source of health care in communities throughout the United States. One in five American women has received care from a Planned Parenthood health center at some point in her life, making it one of the largest women's health care providers in the country.

We are concerned that some members of Congress are pursuing an agenda that would undercut women's access to health care.

H.R. 217 poses a significant threat to women's health. It would prohibit women's health centers from receiving Title X family planning funds if they separately provide abortion care with private funds. Given that the law already requires women's health centers to demonstrate that Title X funds are not used for abortion, this legislation is clearly intended to prevent Planned Parenthood and other women's health centers from receiving this critical funding stream.

American women will suffer if this legislation becomes law, as Planned Parenthood currently serves 36 percent of Americans who receive health care through the Title X program. Simply put, H.R. 217 would cut millions of American women off from their source of primary care.

Now is the time to be working on the issues that Americans care most about: creating jobs and improving the economy. We strongly encourage that you ensure the House of Representatives is focused on these issues, rather than legislation that takes health care away from American women.

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