

Extension of Remarks
Representative Jan Schakowsky
H.R. 3
May 4, 2011

Mr. Speaker,

I rise in opposition to H.R. 3, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act.

House Republicans are waging a war against women and they have made their extreme and dangerous agenda clear – to undermine women’s access to reproductive health care.

HR 3 is a radical attack on women and their reproductive rights. It extends unprecedented limitation on access to abortions, and it singles out and punishes women who want access to this legal service.

Do not be confused. H.R. 3 goes far beyond current law – which is already highly restrictive, and which I oppose. The Hyde Amendment already prohibits women enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare, federal employees, women serving in the military, women in federal prisons, Peace Corps volunteers, and women seeking care under the Indian Health Services Act from getting the care they need. Its very narrow exceptions do not even give women facing severe health

conditions like cancer access to medically necessary abortion care so they can receive chemotherapy treatment.

One of the original goals of this legislation was to narrow the already harmful Hyde exceptions even further. The bill's sponsors tried to redefine rape and incest – to take us back to a time when saying “no” wasn't enough. Public outcry at this mean-spirited and hurtful attempt to make it harder for survivors of rape and incest to access coverage for abortion services forced its removal. Unfortunately, based on the House Judiciary Committee Report accompanying H.R. 3, some members of this chamber are still intent on narrowing the rape exception.

This bill is both hurtful and offensive. H.R. 3 expands an unfair, punitive policy that is dangerous to women's health and applies it to millions of women and men in the private insurance market. No one should be limited in terms of their access to safe and legal abortion.

This legislation redefines the concept of “government funding” far beyond the current common understanding. It prohibits even private and nonfederal government funds from being spent on any activity remotely related to the provision of abortion – any time federal money is involved in funding or subsidizing other, nonabortion-related care.

This legislation increases taxes on small businesses with abortion coverage in their private insurance plans. For decades, small businesses have been fighting insurance company premium demands and struggling to maintain health insurance coverage for their employees. Many of those small businesses – 1 in 3 – are owned by women, but this bill affects both men and women.

The Affordable Care Act provides small businesses with tax credits to help make health insurance both accessible and affordable. Those tax credits are available now. Today, they are worth up to 35 percent of health insurance premium costs. By 2014, they will be worth up to 50 percent.

The Republicans have already passed legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act – taking away tax credits from small business owners and employees who need help. Repeal is bound to fail. But H.R. 3 takes another course – it would repeal this benefit for any small business insurance policy that includes coverage of abortions.

Small business owners will face an unfair and discriminatory choice. If they need the tax credit to make coverage for themselves and their employees affordable, they will need to drop the abortion benefit. If they want to keep the benefit, they will have to go without the tax credit – raising their costs and taking away money that could be used to expand their business and maybe hire another employee. HR 3 will raise taxes on millions of small businesses.

Nearly 90 percent of private health insurance policies offer abortion coverage and this is a blatant attempt to force employers to drop abortion coverage from their private health insurance plans.

Now is the time to work on the issues that are most important to Americans – creating jobs and improving the economy – rather than punishing small businesses and workers through legislation that takes health care away from women.

American women will suffer if this bill becomes law.