

September 22, 2016

The Honorable Trent Franks
Chair, Subcommittee on the Constitution
and Civil Justice
Judiciary Committee
2435 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Cohen
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on the
Constitution and Civil Justice
Judiciary Committee
2404 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Franks and Ranking Member Cohen:

We, the undersigned medical and public health organizations, stand in strong opposition to H.R. 3504 and restrictions on insurance coverage for abortion such as those imposed by the Hyde Amendment. Both policies represent government intrusion into private health care decisions.

H.R. 3504 is a departure from current law. It injects politicians into the patient-physician relationship, disregarding a provider's training and clinical judgment and undermining her ability to determine the best course of action with her patients. Patients need and deserve access to compassionate and appropriate medical care. Every woman is unique and needs to be able to make the decision that is best for her and her family. But H.R. 3504 would impose criminal and civil penalties on providers in an attempt to discourage them from providing care, limiting access for their patients.

The disproportionate and harmful impacts of the Hyde Amendment on low-income women and women of color have been well documented.¹ The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has called for the repeal of the Hyde Amendment and similar restrictions.² All patients deserve access to safe and legal abortion care, regardless of where they live or how much money they have. Coverage bans like the Hyde Amendment have stigmatized abortion and women who have abortions for decades. It is time for this marginalization to end.

Abortion is a safe and legal medical procedure in the United States. Abortion providers comply with existing laws and provide excellent care. Women seeking abortion care deserve the highest quality medical treatment based on their individual health circumstances. Both H.R. 3504 and the Hyde Amendment undermine these principles by attempting to put abortion care out of reach. We urge lawmakers to protect the autonomy and dignity of patients and stand against the insertion of politics into personal health decisions.

Sincerely,

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Public Health Association

¹ A. Dennis, R Manski, K Blanchard, Does Medicaid coverage matter?: A qualitative multi-state study of abortion affordability for low-income women, J. Health Care Poor Underserved (November 2014). Available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25418228>.

² ACOG Committee Opinion, Committee on Health Care for Underserved Women, Increasing Access to Abortion (November 2014). Available at <http://www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Committee-Opinions/Committee->

American Medical Student Association
American Medical Women's Association
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Gay and Lesbian Medical Association
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Medical Students for Choice
National Abortion Federation
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine