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Save Abortion Rights: Stop Stupak

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Abortion Rights in Grave Danger: What Happened?

Under intense lobbying from theocrats and anti-woman, anti-abortion rights members of Congress from both sides of the aisle (many of whom had no intention of voting for the overall House health care reform bill), House Speaker Nancy Pelosi struck a backroom, moonlight deal before the vote on HR 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act.

The result?

A successful floor vote on the Stupak-Pitts Amendment, the greatest threat to women's fundamental right to abortion since it was recognized under the Constitution with *Roe v. Wade*.

Sponsored by Reps. Bart Stupak (D-Mich.) and Joseph Pitts (R-Pa.), this amendment will:

- Prevent low- and moderate-income women receiving subsidies to help cover costs from using *their own money* to purchase private insurance that covers abortion.
- Prevent women with coverage purchased through the new health insurance exchanges, administered by private insurance companies, from using 100 percent of *their own money* to purchase private insurance that covers abortion.
- Prevent low-income women from accessing abortion entirely, in many cases.

Some have suggested that because other aspects of proposed health reform would benefit women, we should pass any bill we can get and try to fix it later. We reject this choice.

Pitting important health insurance industry reforms against women's need for abortion care -- a fundamental, constitutional right -- is unacceptable.

Don't Be Fooled: Stupak-Pitts is NOT Tradition

"We have a tradition in this town, historically, of not financing abortions as part of government-funded health care." -- President Obama to Katie Couric (July 21, 2009)

You could call the Hyde Amendment a tradition; other traditions in the U.S. include sexism and racism in the form of laws controlling women and people of color -- *we must act to end these "traditions."*

Since 1976, the [Hyde Amendment](#) has denied federal coverage for abortion as part of government-funded health care except in cases of incest, rape or life endangerment. Two important points:

1. The Stupak-Pitts Amendment goes far beyond the abusive Hyde Amendment, contrary to what right-wing extremists, and even some Democrats who are desperate to pass health care reform at any cost (*including women's lives*), will say.
2. Both the Hyde Amendment and the Stupak-Pitts Amendment are based on the false, dangerous and sexist premises that women's bodies are the property of Uncle Sam and abortion is not health care.

The Hyde Amendment *already bars* federal funding for abortion, as recognized in many provisions of health care reform legislation; no additional restrictions on abortion in health

reform legislation are necessary to continue this deeply unjust denial of basic constitutional and fundamental rights for women who rely on government support to get the health care they need.

The Stupak-Pitts Amendment goes beyond the Hyde Amendment in that, for the first time, it would ban *private insurance companies* from covering abortion. The Stupak-Pitts Amendment would bar access to abortion for women who:

- Receive 100 percent subsidies from the government to purchase private health insurance.
- Receive partial subsidies from the government and pay some of their own money to purchase private health insurance.
- Spend 100 percent of their own money to purchase private health insurance, if even one person (man or woman) on their plan is receiving subsidies from the government.

What Could Happen if Stupak-Pitts Becomes Law?

- Low- and moderate-income women could be completely prevented from accessing abortion. Who has money to purchase a so-called additional "abortion rider"? Who would even plan to need an "abortion rider"?
- Middle-income women could be severely restricted in accessing abortion -- even if they are using some or *all* of their own money to pay for private insurance.
- Private insurance companies that currently cover abortion could be discouraged from doing so entirely -- because they will have to modify their plans to participate in proposed health exchanges.
- We could face new exclusionary battles over birth control and other forms of reproductive health care coverage in the future. Remember, the supporters of Stupak-Pitts oppose contraception as well as abortion rights.

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