

July 22, 2010

Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

When you signed into law the Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act (PPAHC) which, among other provisions, provides for the swift creation of high-risk insurance for people with debilitating pre-existing conditions, I felt that we, as a nation, were establishing the beginning of a caring, and needed, response to a serious abuse inherent to the health insurance delivery system. But, the recent announcement applicable to this Act by your administration, prohibiting abortions excepting cases of rape, incest and life endangerment to the mother, carves out a legal medical procedure that has serious implications for a population that is already medically compromised.

I strongly oppose this decision because it limits the rights of women to access a safe and legal health care procedure. I am additionally offended that this vulnerable population will bear unconscionable health and financial burdens. There is no question that the health problems of women already suffering from major physical ailments could be exacerbated by having to carry a pregnancy to term and that there would certainly be an added burden to their families and caregivers if the unwanted and unsafe pregnancy continues.

There is no provision in the PPAHC Affordable Care Act that mandates this punitive measure. The Stupak amendment was defeated in Congress and the Nelson amendment is limited to State-based health insurance exchanges. The high-risk pools are not, and should not be, included.

If you do not reverse this decision, the only access for abortion remaining for many vulnerable women will be to pay for the costs out-of-pocket. This is an outrageous solution. The women who would benefit from the high-risk pools are sick, in desperate need of insurance relief for their staggering medical expenses and least able to pay for an abortion from individual funds. It is also important to note that women in this high-risk category would, because of their medical

conditions, require abortion services that would be more costly than the lower charges usually incurred by healthy women.

I feel it is my responsibility to question this decision, which puts vulnerable women at increased risk of medical problems and does not consider abortion care for health emergencies.

I urge you to reconsider this policy and to re-affirm your commitment to broaden health care insurance without excluding at-risk women from equal access to legal health care procedures.

Sincerely yours,

Liz Krueger
State Senator

cc: Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius
US Senator Charles Schumer
US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
NYS Governor David Paterson
NYS Attorney General Andrew Cuomo
NYS Commissioner of Health Richard Daines, M.D.
Congress Member Gary Ackerman
Congress Member Mike Arcuri
Congress Member Tim Bishop
Congress Member Yvette D. Clark
Congress Member Joseph Crowley
Congress Member Eliot L. Engel
Congress Member John Hall
Congress Member Brian Higgins
Congress Member Maurice Hinchey
Congress Member Steve Israel
Congress Member Pete King
Congress Member Christopher Lee
Congress Member Nita Lowey
Congress Member Dan Maffei
Congress Member Carolyn B. Maloney
Congress Member Carolyn McCarthy
Congress Member Michael E. McMahon
Congress Member Gregory W. Meeks
Congress Member Scott Murphy
Congress Member Jerrold Nadler
Congress Member Bill Owens
Congress Member Charles B. Rangel

Congress Member José E. Serrano
Congress Member Louise M. Slaughter
Congress Member Paul D. Tonko
Congress Member Edolphus Towns
Congress Member Nydia M. Velázquez
Congress Member Anthony Weiner
Mayor Michael Bloomberg
Tracey Brooks, CEO Family Planning Advocates
Nancy Keenan, President NARAL Pro-Choice America
Kelli Conlin, President NARAL Pro-Choice New York
Donna Lieberman, Executive Director New York Civil Liberties Union
Sonia Ossorio, Executive Director NOW New York City
Cecile Richards, President Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Joan Malin, President Planned Parenthood of New York City
Byllye Avery, Co-Founder Raising Women's Voices
Lois Uttley, Co-Founder Raising Women's Voices