



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Reproductive Rights Are Not Negotiable

ERIC T. SCHNEIDERMAN November 17, 2009

| ISSUE: **WOMEN'S HEALTH**

The passage of a health care reform bill with a public option in the House ought to be cause for celebration, but an amendment added at the last minute eviscerating the reproductive rights of women casts a dark cloud over this historic victory. The **Stupak-Pitts amendment** represents the biggest threat to reproductive freedom in decades - and it must be removed from the final bill.

The Stupak-Pitts amendment makes it nearly impossible for private insurance companies participating in the new health care system to provide reproductive health coverage, including abortion services. This restriction goes **far beyond** the current federal ban on public abortion funding. It actually prohibits anyone receiving health insurance subsidies from purchasing a health insurance plan - with their own money - that covers abortion care. Almost certainly, this amendment will encourage many plans in the private market to drop coverage for reproductive services entirely.

This policy is both discriminatory and dangerous. Denying coverage of reproductive services will not end or even decrease the number of abortions, it merely shifts the costs elsewhere. Since no one plans for an unplanned pregnancy, this backdoor abortion ban could lead to delays in treatment, potentially endangering women's lives.

Undoubtedly, passing a federal health care bill will require compromises, but the freedom of women is not negotiable.

It's not too late. Contact your [U.S. Representative](#) and [Senators](#) to ensure that health care reform does not come at the expense of women's rights. Tell them the anti-choice language from the House bill must be stripped in the Senate.