

November 19, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey:

As you complete fiscal year (FY) 2016 appropriations, the undersigned organizations write to strongly oppose funding cuts for programs that family planning providers rely on to provide quality care to millions of women, men, and young people, as well as to oppose ideological policy riders that are harmful to women's health.

We are encouraged by the recent passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA) and the critical sequestration relief that legislation provides to nondefense discretionary (NDD) programs. Funding for NDD programs including public health remains far too low: even with the passage of BBA, NDD funding for 2016 will be 12% below the 2010 level when adjusted for inflation. But as Congress continues its attacks on publicly funded family planning providers that deliver critical, high-quality health care services to millions people each year, we are concerned the essential public health programs that support providers' work, such as the Title X Family Planning Program, will remain targets for politically motivated cuts in FY 2016 appropriations legislation.

Publicly funded family planning providers offer a wide range of services for poor, low-income, uninsured, and underinsured individuals including contraception, cancer screenings, HIV testing, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In 2013 alone, publicly funded family planning services helped women avoid 2 million unintended pregnancies.¹ As you know, the House Appropriations Committee completely eliminated funding for the Title X Family Planning Program in its FY 2016 Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, and the Senate Appropriations Committee also proposed disproportionate cuts to the program. These cuts, and other proposals to limit access to care, would have a devastating impact on the four in 10 women obtaining care at family planning centers for which that center is their only source of health care.²

Additionally, a number of potentially damaging health policy riders were included in individual FY 2016 appropriations bills as they moved through the House Appropriations Committee earlier this year. We oppose these riders, as well as any additional policy riders that seek to dismantle the family planning safety net by carving out, in whole or in part, the existing provider network. The ideological attacks targeted at Planned Parenthood or intended to limit participation by other providers shows a blatant disregard for how millions of individuals across this country choose to access high-quality health care from the providers they trust.

¹ Frost JJ, Zolna MR and Frohwirth L, *Contraceptive Needs and Services*, 2013, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2015, <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/win/contraceptive-needs-2013.pdf>, accessed October 2015

² Frost JJ, Gold RB and Bucek A, Specialized family planning clinics in the United States: Why women choose them and their role in meeting women's health care needs, *Women's Health Issues*, 2012, 22(6):e519–e525.

As you and your colleagues make decisions about how to proceed with FY 2016 appropriations bills, we urge you to protect women's health by providing sufficient funding for critical women's health programs and to ensure that ideological policy riders are excluded from the final package. Ensuring adequate funding for health care programs and blocking damaging riders will protect women's access to vital health care services around the country.

Sincerely,

30 for 30 Campaign

Advocates for Youth

AIDS Alabama

AIDS United

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Civil Liberties Union

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American Psychological Association

American Sexual Health Association

American Society for Reproductive Medicine

Association of Nurses in AIDS Care

Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)

Cascade AIDS Project

Catholics for Choice

Center for Reproductive Rights

Center for Women Policy Studies

Feminist Majority Foundation

Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.

Healthy Teen Network

Human Rights Campaign

Institute of Science and Human Values

Jewish Women International

League of Women Voters of the United States

NARAL Pro-Choice America

Nashville CARES

National Abortion Federation

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
National Health Law Program
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Connection Action Fund
Population Institute
Project Inform
Public Health Institute
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Republican Majority for Choice
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
UltraViolet
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity