

Hyde and Abortion Access Legislator Visits

Talking Points for Supportive Legislators

Purpose of Visit

- We are here representing _____, a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Our congregation is dedicated to social and economic justice, and we have come here to talk to you about unjust bans on Medicaid coverage of abortion.
- We believe that all women should have coverage for the cost of abortion, regardless of their ability to pay or source of insurance. Since 1976, the Hyde Amendment has annually and systematically restricted women's access to comprehensive reproductive health care. We hope to discuss the barriers women face in accessing abortion, hear about your perspective on it and discuss our requests specific to abortion coverage.
- We want to thank you for the important work you have already done to ensure that every woman can exercise her own moral agency and get affordable reproductive health care.

Hyde

- Since the passage of the Hyde amendment Congress has withheld coverage for abortion services from women insured through the Medicaid program—now numbering nine million women of reproductive age, or 15 percent of the population. Unitarian Universalists share an explicit commitment to justice for all communities in our society, especially those that have been historically marginalized. The Hyde Amendment creates unjust obstacles for women, and disproportionately affects women of color, low-income women, immigrant women, and rural women. Reducing health care options for some, based on their economic strata, is profoundly unjust.
- A woman's health insurance should enable her to take care of her health and well-being. Women struggling to make ends meet shouldn't receive health care services inferior to women with more money, including abortion care.
- Our religious principles affirm that every person is their own moral agent, and should have the rights to carry out that agency, especially when it comes to intimate and important decisions about health, sexuality, whether or not to have children, and how to build their families. A woman should be able to make decisions about her health care guided by her own conscience, her personal circumstances, and her own morals or faith.
- Providing insurance coverage for abortion care ensures a woman will be able to see a licensed, quality health provider and receive safe care. Withholding coverage, as per the Hyde Amendment, means that some women have to seek out substandard, possibly unsafe care.

State Specific Information

If the state covers abortion (AK, AZ, CA, CT, HI, IL*, MD, MA, MN, MT, NJ, NM, NY, OR, VT, WA, and WV):*

- Here in [State], a woman enrolled in [Medicaid, or state-specific program name] is covered, should she need an abortion. That means that a woman seeking an abortion does not have to forgo rent, put off getting care, or shut off her own heat and telephone just to pay for her health care. However, most states do not cover abortion care, creating an inequitable patchwork system of health care where a

woman's ability to make a real decision about whether to end a pregnancy depends on where she resides.

If the state does not cover abortion

- Here in [State], a woman enrolled in [Medicaid, or state-specific program name] is not covered if she needs an abortion. Withholding coverage can impose great financial burdens on women with limited means, many of whom already lack access to basic health care. The impact these barriers have on her and her family can be far-reaching; she may be forced to delay needed care, or shut off her heat or telephone just to pay for the care she needs. For a woman to be able to make a real decision, based on her own circumstances and religious beliefs, she needs to be able to afford it. By limiting a woman's access to abortion, coverage restrictions impinge on her ability to make her own healthcare decisions and achieve economic security.

Ask

- We urge you and your colleagues to speak out against the Hyde amendment. This would lay important groundwork in our goal of overturning the Hyde amendment in the coming years. We also ask that you work with us to raise awareness about the importance of ensuring that every woman can get coverage for a full range of reproductive health care, including abortion care.

Questions

- How can we be helpful to you?

Closing

- We commend you for standing up against these attacks on women and urge you to continue to make the health and economic security of our nation a priority by opposing all attempts to limit access to the comprehensive health care women and their families need to stay healthy and contribute to our nation's economy.
- Unitarian Universalists are people of faith that believe strongly in every person's moral agency and equality, including access to reproductive health care and abortion. With our interfaith partners, we have been working on abortion rights and access for more than 50 years.
- We hope that Congress will ultimately lift all abortion coverage restrictions, which harm women's health and erect unnecessary and unfair barriers to comprehensive reproductive health care.

* These states are mandated to provide Medicaid coverage of abortion, but are not fully compliant.