

Legislation Text

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Calling on Congress to reinstate abortion service coverage for women enrolled in public insurance programs by enacting the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act, and further calling on the Pennsylvania General Assembly to provide abortion coverage in public insurance programs in Pennsylvania and lift the ban on such coverage in private insurance plans sold through the Pennsylvania Health Insurance Exchange.

WHEREAS, Reproductive health is a critical component of women's overall health, and women need access to safe, affordable, and comprehensive reproductive health care throughout their lives, including screening for cancer and sexually transmitted infections, contraceptive services, abortion care, prenatal care, and labor and delivery services; and

WHEREAS, Woman's freedom to make reproductive decisions is vital to her safety, well-being, economic opportunity, and ability to participate equally in society, however, more than 84,000 Philadelphia women of reproductive age enrolled in Medicaid are denied coverage for comprehensive pregnancy-related care that includes abortion care, because of bans on such coverage imposed by federal and state lawmakers; and

WHEREAS, Many women in Philadelphia, including state and federal employees, Peace Corps members, beneficiaries of Indian Health Services and military insurance programs, obtain insurance coverage through other public insurance programs that also include restrictions on coverage for abortion; and

WHEREAS, The United States Supreme Court since 1973 has ruled that a woman's ability to make her own personal medical decisions about when or whether to have children is a protected Constitutional right; and

WHEREAS, Notwithstanding these Constitutionally protected rights to safe and affordable abortions, severe restrictions in the Hyde Amendment, passed by Congress on September 30, 1976, have impeded the ability of low-income women enrolled in the Medicaid health insurance program from accessing this medical procedure; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania law currently imposes limitations on insurance coverage of abortion in the state Medicaid program; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia's longstanding commitment to gender equality in its Fair Practices Ordinance, means that denial or limitation of essential reproductive healthcare services to women constitutes gender discrimination; and

WHEREAS, Laws that restrict insurance coverage of abortion create unjust obstacles to quality health care and the harm falls hardest on low-income women, women of color, and young women; and

WHEREAS, A woman who wants to get an abortion but is denied is more likely to fall into poverty than one who can get an abortion. This is particularly significant in Philadelphia where Census data has found that in the last 12 months over 229,000 Philadelphia women have lived in poverty and that Philadelphia has the highest

deep-poverty rate of the largest ten cities in the United States, with nearly 185,000 people and 60,000 children living at or below half of the federal poverty rate; and

WHEREAS, The government, by partially or fully subsidizing health insurance and health care services for individuals who meet certain eligibility criteria, recognizes that health care is essential to protect an individual's ability to fully participate in her family, community, and society; and

WHEREAS, Health insurance, whether private or government funded, should cover the full range of a woman's options when she is facing an unintended pregnancy, so that she is able to, without interference, make a the decision she deems best for her and her family; and

WHEREAS, The Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act, introduced in the United States House of Representatives in July 2015, would ensure abortion coverage for every woman, regardless of her income level or type of insurance and prohibit interference with decisions of private health insurance companies to offer coverage for abortion care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby calls on Congress to reinstate abortion service coverage for women enrolled in public insurance programs by enacting the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act and Pennsylvania General Assembly to provide abortion coverage in public insurance programs in Pennsylvania and lift the ban on such coverage in private insurance plans sold through the Pennsylvania Health Insurance Exchange.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That it hereby calls on President Obama and Governor Wolf to actively support these and all other measures to insure and protect the rights of women everywhere to have unhindered access to safe and comprehensive health care.