

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senate Majority Leader Schumer, House Minority Leader Jeffries, Chair Murray, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We, the 135 undersigned organizations committed to civil and human rights, write to urge you to reject any appropriations bills that contain riders that would restrict access to essential health care, including abortion, contraception, and gender-affirming care, whether delivered in-person or via telehealth. We are united in our belief that all people should be able to access the care they need, and to make informed decisions about their own bodies and lives. As such, we were appalled to see language limiting access to these services, both directly and by targeting organizations that provide such care, in the fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations bills, including many new draconian and discriminatory proposals from House appropriators.

Our country is facing a reproductive health care crisis, one that has been accelerated by the Supreme Court's extreme decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturning *Roe v. Wade* and eliminating the constitutional right to abortion. In the first 100 days post-*Dobbs*, at least 66 clinics in 15 states stopped offering abortion services, and over the past year the average travel time to an abortion facility in the U.S. has more than tripled. As of September 2023, 21 states have bans on abortion in place, leaving 1 in 3 women, plus more transgender and nonbinary people, without abortion access and disproportionately impacting people of color, people with disabilities, young people, people living in rural areas, and people working to make ends meet. State policymakers have also taken *Dobbs* as an invitation to attempt to limit access to contraception, especially for adolescents and those enrolled in Medicaid.

Abortion bans and restrictions impact people across all areas of their lives, including their ability to work, care for the children they already have, and determine their own life's course. People who are turned away from abortion services and go on to give birth are much more likely than are their peers who are able to access abortion care to experience a number of harmful impacts, including financial harm (such as an increase in household poverty, a reduction in credit score, an increase in debt, and a rise in the likelihood of bankruptcies and evictions), exacerbation of serious medical conditions (such as high blood pressure), and a greater likelihood of remaining in a relationship where interpersonal violence is present. Moreover, the states with the greatest number of abortion restrictions have the poorest postpartum health outcomes.

We have also seen a surge in state and federal attacks against transgender people, including targeted efforts to eliminate their access to essential health care. A large body of scientific evidence compiled over the last five decades illustrates that gender-affirming care is safe, effective care that improves the physical and mental health of transgender people. In fact, every major medical and mental health association in the country – representing more than 1.3 million doctors – supports individualized, age-appropriate gender-affirming care that promotes the health and well-being of transgender people.

In the House, seven out of the twelve fiscal year 2024 appropriations bills contain dangerous, discriminatory riders banning access to a wide range of gender-affirming care services for transgender youth and adults. If adopted, these policies would have devastating and far-reaching impacts: they would deprive transgender people of best practice, medically necessary care, impede health care institutions and providers from offering quality services, and limit access to health care for everyone. Similarly, eight of the bills include harmful anti-abortion and anti-contraception measures. These riders represent extreme political intrusion into the practice of medicine guided by evidence-based clinical standards, as well as into decision-making by patients, their families, and clinicians, and will disproportionately harm people of color, people with disabilities, young people, people living in rural areas, and people working to make ends meet.

Legislative and policy attacks on access to both reproductive health care and gender-affirming care are attacks on the same basic right to self-determination and bodily autonomy. Many of the medical providers who offer abortion and other reproductive health services also offer gender-affirming care, and vice versa, because this care is part of the full spectrum of essential sexual and reproductive health care our communities need. Policies attempting to prevent people from receiving either form of care ultimately serve to obstruct both and deprive many of our most vulnerable communities of time-sensitive, life-saving care.

We, the undersigned 135 organizations, urge you in the strongest possible terms to make clear that any appropriations bill or package that includes language attempting to block access to reproductive or gender-affirming care is completely unacceptable.

We thank you for your attention to this letter. Our organizations look forward to continuing to work with you to advance health equity and ensure access to essential health services for communities across the country.

Sincerely,

American Civil Liberties Union
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund,
Inc.
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality

National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning & Reproductive
Health Association
Physicians for Reproductive Health

Joined by:

Abortion Action Missouri
Academy LGBTQ
Act Now: End AIDS (ANEA) Coalition
Advocates for Youth
AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Foundation Chicago
AIDS United
Alaskans Together For Equality
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Atheists
American Humanist Association
American Sexual Health Association
Americans United for Separation of Church and
State
Arkansas Black Gay Men's Forum
Association of Latinos/as/xs Motivating Action
(ALMA)
Basic Rights Oregon
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
CA LGBTQ Health and Human Services
Network
Catholics for Choice
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Reproductive Rights
CenterLink: The Community of LGBTQ
Centers
Community Access National Network
Council for Global Equality
EducateUS
Equality California
Equality Federation
Equality Florida
Equality Illinois
Equality Michigan
Equality NC
Equality New Mexico
Equality Ohio
Fairness Campaign

Family Equality
Five Horizons Health Services
Florida LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus
FORGE, Inc.
Freedom Oklahoma
Gender Justice
Georgia Equality
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing
LGBTQ+ Health
Guttmacher Institute
Health Not Prisons Collective
Housing Works
Human Rights Campaign
I Need An A.com
Ibis Reproductive Health
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's
Reproductive Justice Agenda
Interfaith Alliance
Ipas
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Lavender Legal Center
Lawyers for Good Government
League of Women Voters of the United States
Los Angeles LGBT Center
Louisiana Abortion Fund
Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition
Mazzoni Center
Minnesota Lavender Bar Association
Minority Veterans of America
MomsRising
Montana Human Rights Network
Movement Advancement Project
NASTAD
National Asian Pacific American Women's
Forum
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in
Women's Health (NPWH)
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

National Employment Law Project
National Health Law Program
National HIV/AIDS Housing Coalition
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National LGBT Cancer Network
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Trans Bar Association
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
National Working Positive Coalition
New York City Anti-Violence Project
NMAC
One Colorado
OutFront Minnesota
OutNebraska
PCAF
PFLAG National
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Positive Women's Network-USA
Power to Decide
PrEP4All
Project On Government Oversight
PROMO Missouri
Rainbow Cafe LGBTQ Center
Rainbow Health Minnesota
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Reproductive Freedom for All (formerly
NARAL Pro-Choice America)
Reproductive Health Access Project

RH Impact: The Collaborative for Equity and
Justice
RHITES (Reproductive Health Initiative for
Telehealth Equity & Solutions)
SAGE
San Francisco Community Health Center
Service Women's Action Network
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change
Silver State Equality
State Innovation Exchange (SIX) Action
Tennessee Equality Project
The AIDS Institute
The New York City LGBT Community Center
The Well Project
Transformation Project
Transformation Project Advocacy Network
Transgender Law Center
Transhealth
TransOhio
Treatment Action Group
U.S. People Living With HIV Caucus
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association
University of Iowa Law and Policy in Action
Clinic
URGE: Unite for Reproductive and Gender
Equity
Vivent Health
Watke, Polk & Sena, LLP
Whitman-Walker Institute
Women of Reform Judaism