

March 3, 2011

All Members of Congress
US House/Senate

Dear [Member of Congress],

As progressive Catholic organizations, we are compelled to speak out against policies that unfairly target the least among us. Current legislative efforts to defund Title X, the federal government program dedicated to providing family planning services for those in need, are an egregious example of policies that disproportionately disadvantage the poor. Our Catholic commitment to social justice compels us to write to you today, urging you to oppose these efforts at every turn.

Title X is a vital source of funding for clinics that provide essential contraceptive health services to millions of people from all walks of life, including many Catholics. These clinics are on the front lines of promoting reproductive and sexual health by helping prevent unintended pregnancies, providing education about sexual health and avoiding sexually transmitted diseases. They also work to ensure that people who want to have children get the information they need for a healthy pregnancy. Especially in these difficult economic times, women, men and their families rely on clinics with Title X funding to receive basic healthcare. These services are essential for millions of low-income Americans and are supported by vast majorities of Catholics in the United States.

As Catholics, we are called by our faith to show solidarity with and compassion for the poor. Our tradition's preferential option for the poor compels us to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the least among us. Recently introduced legislation that eliminates funding for Title X does not put the needs of poor women and men first. In fact, the legislation does quite the opposite as it punishes those with few affordable options for obtaining basic healthcare, especially those with limited incomes and those who lack adequate health insurance.

We are also called to listen to our individual conscience in matters of moral decision-making, and to respect other people's right to do the same. We cannot and do not presume to tell others how best to listen to their own consciences as they make important decisions about whether and when to have children. Without funding for Title X, too many people of limited economic means will be left without basic preventative healthcare and family planning services they, using their own conscience, have decided they need.

Catholics throughout the United States are unequivocally committed to ensuring that women and men have access to the healthcare they need. We urge you to join us in this commitment.

Sincerely,

8th Day Center for Justice
A Critical Mass: Women Celebrating Eucharist
Call to Action
Catholics for Choice
Chicago Women-Church
Congregation Peace with Justice Committee Sisters of Providence SMW
CORPUS
DignityUSA
National Coalition of American Nuns
New Ways Ministry
Take Back Our Church
Voice of the Faithful New Jersey
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)
Women's Ordination Conference