

December 7, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor Health and Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor Health and Human Services, Education, and Related
Agencies

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

Catholics for Choice submits this testimony in unequivocal support of the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act of 2019 (HR 1692/S 758) and urges the Committee to advance this important legislation. Catholics for Choice shapes and advances sexual and reproductive ethics that are based on justice, reflect a commitment to individual well-being and respect and affirm the capacity of each person to make moral decisions about their lives. We serve as a voice for more than 70 million Catholics across the nation—the vast majority of US Catholics—who believe in the primacy of conscience and support access to abortion and other reproductive healthcare as an extension of the principles of our faith.

As Catholics, we are called by our faith to follow our consciences in all matters of moral decision-making and to respect the right of others to do the same. This includes the right to make decisions about abortion and reproductive healthcare. Decisions about how to respond to a pregnancy are sacred and deeply personal. Bans on abortion coverage erode this right, letting politicians interfere with an individual's sacrosanct personal decision, as well as cultivating judgment and stigma around such decisions.

Catholics' respect for conscience leads us to support the conscience-based decisions that each person makes, regardless of how we might make that decision ourselves. In fact, a majority of Catholics believe abortion can be a moral choice.

(more)

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Jamie Manson

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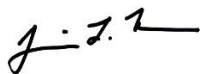
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Furthermore, our Catholic social justice tradition compels us to advocate for the poor and those marginalized in our community. We know that the Hyde Amendment and similar restrictions on access to abortion disproportionately affect people with lower incomes, people of color, those living in rural areas, the young and LGBTQ communities; they are hurt first and worst. Catholics respect the dignity and the worth of each person and are committed to building a just society. Already, too many are denied abortion coverage because of how much they earn, where they live, the color of their skin or their gender identity. Since the passage of the Hyde Amendment in 1976, anti-abortion policymakers have continually enacted bans on health coverage and funding for abortion that push this decision out of reach for many, particularly those struggling to make ends meet. Restricting care from individuals and communities who need it most is morally unconscionable.

The EACH Woman Act allows us to uphold our call as Catholics to treat every person, no matter their station, with dignity, respect and compassion. This is why a majority of Catholics believe that insurance plans, whether government or private, should include coverage for contraceptives and abortion care. We support the EACH Woman Act because it reinforces the principles of social justice we are taught and enables the most vulnerable people to access the reproductive health services and medications they need. EACH Woman empowers each person to make the conscience-based decisions that are best for themselves and their family.

We urge the Committee to advance the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance Act, eliminate harmful abortion coverage bans and pass future appropriations bills free from such unfair coverage restrictions. We invite the committee to reimagine what it looks like to create a society where individuals are trusted to make moral decisions about their lives and priority is given to implementing policies that create a more just and compassionate society for all. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. L. Manson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jamie L. Manson
President