

November 16, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States Capitol, H-204
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

We, the undersigned 26 organizations dedicated to economic justice and women's economic well-being, urge you to bring the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH) Act to the floor for a vote before the end of the year. The EACH Act removes longstanding barriers to abortion access, in particular the Hyde Amendment and other restrictions on abortion coverage in health care. Restricting Medicaid coverage of abortion forces one in four low-income women seeking abortion to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term.¹ Due to systemic racism and a long history of unequal access to health care in our country, the harm of these restrictions have fallen hardest on people working to make ends meet, who are more likely to be people of color. Each person, regardless of their income or socioeconomic status, should have the freedom to live, work, and make decisions about their health and their future with dignity and respect.

We write in support of the EACH Act and abortion access because economic justice and reproductive freedom are inextricably linked: research demonstrates that the freedom to make decisions about our own reproductive healthcare is fundamental to our economic security throughout our lives.

The evidence that abortion access affects women's economic well-being is crystal clear: research has found that people who are denied an abortion are significantly more likely to fall into poverty, increase their amount of debt and generally have worse financial security for years.² Furthermore, lack of abortion access limits women's education attainment, labor force participation, and the ability to access higher paying jobs, ultimately causing severe consequences for a person's career trajectory, particularly for Black women.³ On the other hand,

¹ The Guttmacher Institute. (2021, February 12). *Medicaid Abortion Coverage*. Retrieved 19 October 2022, from <https://www.guttmacher.org/evidence-you-can-use/medicaid-coverage-abortion>.

² Miller, S., Wherry, L., & Foster, D.G. (2022, January). *The Economic Consequences of Being Denied an Abortion*. Retrieved 26 September 2022 from the National Bureau of Economic Research website:

https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26662/w26662.pdf; Foster, D.G., Ralph, L.J., Biggs, M.A., Gerdtz, C., Roberts, S.C.M., & Glymour, M.A. (2018, February) Socioeconomic outcomes of women who receive and women who are denied wanted abortions. *American Journal of Public Health, 108(3)*, 407-413; Miller, S., Wherry, L.R., & Foster, D.G. (2020, January). What happens after an abortion denial?

³ Among young Black women, access to abortion increases college entrance by 100 percent and employment status by 44 percent. Jones, K. (2021, August). At a Crossroads: The impact of abortion access on future economic

research has shown that abortion access has increased educational attainment for Black women, increased women's participation in the workforce, and led to improved educational and economic outcomes for children.⁴

The costs of forced pregnancy do not end with the health care bills during pregnancy, childbirth admission, and postpartum care: the lack of vital work supports and protections for women in the US, such as paid leave, paid sick days, and reasonable accommodations for pregnancy mean that many are forced to choose between paying their bills and caring for their own health and the health of their loved ones. It means that they may be required to return to work immediately after giving birth, juggling parenting responsibilities, and grappling with the skyrocketing costs of childcare. As it stands, three out of four workers do not have paid family leave, and one in four do not have a single paid sick day.⁵ Of these people, Black, Latinx, and Native workers are the least likely to have access to paid leave or the economic resources to take unpaid leave following childbirth.⁶ Furthermore, mothers, despite increasingly being the breadwinners in their families, often face a "motherhood wage penalty" due in part to caregiving responsibilities:⁷ mothers working full time, year round are paid just 74 cents for every dollar paid to fathers.⁸ Disaggregated data reveals even starker pay gaps for mothers of color: for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic fathers, Black mothers are paid just 52 cents, Latina mothers just 47 cents, and Native American mothers 49 cents.⁹ These wage gaps cause ripple effects on people's entire economic lives, affecting their ability to afford health and child care costs, save up for retirement, pay their mortgage, or stay away from debt.

outcomes. Retrieved 5 September 2022 from the American University website:

<https://dra.american.edu/islandora/object/auislandora%3A95123/datastream/PDF/view>.

⁴ Bernstein, A. & Jones, K.M. (2019). *The Economic Effects of Abortion Access: A Review of the Evidence*.

Retrieved 11 October 2022 from Institute for Women's Policy Research website:

https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/B379_Abortion-Access_rfinal.pdf.

⁵ National Partnership analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022). *Employee Benefits in the United States Summary* [Press Release]. Retrieved 26 September 2022, from https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ebs2_nr0.htm.

⁶ Mason, J., & Molina Acosta, P. (2021, March). *Called to Care: A Racially Just Recovery Demands Paid Family and Medical Leave*. Retrieved 26 September 2022 from National Partnership for Women & Families website:

<https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/economic-justice/reports/called-to-care-a-rationally-just-demands-paid-family-and-medical-leave.html>; Gupta, P., Goldman, T., Hernandez, E. & Rose, M. (2018, December). *Paid Family and Medical Leave is Critical for Low-Wage Workers and Their Families*. Retrieved 26 September 2022 from the

Center for Law and Social Policy website:

<https://www.clasp.org/publications/fact-sheet/paid-family-and-medical-leave-critical-low-wage-workers-and-their-families/>.

⁷ Boesh, D., & Hamm, K. (2020, June). *Valuing Women's Caregiving During and After the Coronavirus Crisis*.

Retrieved 26 September 2022 from The Center for American Progress website:

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/valuing-womens-caregiving-coronavirus-crisis/>.

⁸ National Women's Law Center. (2022, August 31). *The Wage Gap Shortchanges Mothers*. Retrieved 26 September 2022, from <https://nwlc.org/resource/mothers-equal-pay-day/>.

⁹ National Women's Law Center. (2022, August 31). *The Wage Gap Shortchanges Mothers*. Retrieved 26 September 2022, from <https://nwlc.org/resource/mothers-equal-pay-day/>.

Policy solutions to these issues such as raising the minimum wage, ensuring access to paid leave and paid sick days, and closing the gender wage gap are not substitutes for abortion access. But the lack of these supports in the face of abortion restrictions—which are most prevalent in the very states that fail to implement these policies—mean that pregnant people are caught in an impossible situation that threatens their economic well-being and deprives them of autonomy not just over their bodies but the trajectory of the lives.

Abortion access is an economic justice issue. It enables women and people who can get pregnant to thrive, control their own life paths, and to live with dignity. The decision to parent is one of the biggest and most important life decisions a person can make, and it has the ability to drastically change the economic well-being of a person's life. But abortion is not accessible if it is not affordable, and in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision and following nearly half a century of the Hyde Amendment, Congress must respond with the recognition that abortion access cannot be separated from economic justice. We urge you to bring the EACH Act to a vote this Congress so that people struggling to make ends meet can access abortion care with dignity.

Sincerely,

American Association of University Women
Center for Economic and Policy Research
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
Family Values @ Work
Family Values @ Work Action
Institute for Women's Policy Research
Jewish Women International
MADRE
National Council of Jewish Women
National Employment Law Project
National Network for Arab American Communities
National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV)
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Urban League
Oxfam America
Rhia Ventures
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The National Domestic Violence Hotline
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries

Women of Reform Judaism
Women's Law Project
YWCA USA