

House GOP Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations Bills Threaten Women's Ability to Thrive

House Republican leaders make their priorities clear: undoing long-standing protections for women in the workplace, slashing critical women's health programs and further restricting access to abortion and reproductive health services.

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Summary

Since the second Trump Administration began, Congressional Republicans have stood in lockstep with the President to tear down rights and protections for American women: gutting Medicaid by nearly \$1 trillion, eliminating key federal agencies that protect workers from discrimination, upending access to food for millions of low-income people and enacting a backdoor abortion ban by "defunding" Planned Parenthood. These Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) appropriations bills ramp up these attacks on programs that are critical to the health and well-being of millions of women and families across the country, threatening their ability to be free, to feel safe, and to thrive.

Labor & Employment

The House Republican funding bills for labor, employment, and civil rights programs would undermine workers' rights and the ability for women to thrive in the workplace. This includes:

- **Eliminating funding for the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau.** Eliminating the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau would cause extensive damage to women's ability to succeed and advance in the workplace nationwide. From its inception more than 100 years ago, the Women's Bureau has played a vital role in highlighting the challenges facing women workers. The Women's Bureau is the only federal agency with the sole mission of focusing on the interests of women in the workforce, providing invaluable research and analysis on women's employment data and successfully running a number of grantmaking programs to help women advance in the workplace, including the Obama-era paid leave research fund that delivered grants to explore creating or expanding state-level paid family and medical leave programs.

- Eliminating funding for the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP).** Federal contract workers rely on the experience and expertise of federal enforcers at the Labor Department to protect them from discrimination. Without them, federal contract workers will become more vulnerable to discrimination that could cost them equal pay, a promotion, or even a job. OFCCP had enforced prohibitions against discrimination for sixty years, until most of its authority was stripped away in January when this Administration rescinded EO 11246. From 2014 to 2024, [the OFCCP obtained](#) over \$260.8 million for employees and job seekers who were discriminated against; obtained financial relief for over 250,900 employees and job seekers; and secured over 22,600 job opportunities and salary adjustments for individuals who had suffered discrimination. Eliminating this office will put all federal contractors, and particularly those who are disabled or veterans, at risk of discrimination.
- Cutting \$25 million for the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division.** This division is responsible for outreach and enforcement of key labor laws like the Family and Medical Leave Act, minimum wage and overtime regulations, protections against workplace retaliation and the right to pump breastmilk at work. These laws are critical to women's participation in the workplace – especially the lowest paid workers, disproportionately women of color and women overall – and cutting funding for outreach and enforcement would give women and workers of color less recourse for wage theft and wrongfully denied leave.
- Undermining basic wage and hour protections.** The funding bill for the Labor Department would block the agency from using a 2024 interpretive rule that helps reduce the risk that employees are misclassified as independent contractors. This could have the effect of denying workers minimum wage, overtime, job-protected leave, equal pay protections and the right to pump breast milk at work.
- Cutting \$20 million for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).** The EEOC protects Americans from job discrimination and advocates in court on behalf of workers alleging prohibited workplace practices like sexual harassment. It has historically provided education to the employer community to clarify the law and recommend best practices, as well as collect and analyze invaluable data about workforce trends. From 2014 to 2024, the EEOC recovered [\\$5.6 billion](#) for workers who were discriminated against, including nearly \$700 million just in Fiscal Year 2024. Due to increased costs, even flat funding has led to a 45-year low in staffing, limiting the number of civil rights enforcers and possibly contributing to the widening gender wage gap.
- Undermining key anti-discrimination protections.** The funding bill for the EEOC includes two policy provisions that would undermine workers' rights to work free from discrimination. The first would prevent the EEOC from fully enforcing its regulations implementing the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA), a bipartisan law that ensures pregnant workers can access reasonable accommodations in the workplace so they are not forced to put their

health at risk for their paycheck. The second would prevent the EEOC from enforcing its updated guidance on harassment in the workplace, which helps ensure that all workers can work safely and with dignity by helping employers, workers and enforcement staff recognize and prevent illegal harassment in the workplace. These standards help protect workers against illegal harassment and discrimination, and preventing the EEOC from enforcing them makes all workers less safe.

Women's Health

The House Republican funding bill for the Department of Health and Human Services includes drastic cuts and disinvestments in key programs that would harm women's health and access to care, worsen our nation's health workforce shortage and undermine efforts to end health inequities. Furthermore, after gutting Medicaid in their Republican budget bill which will rip health coverage away from millions of women and [put over 140 labor and delivery units](#) in rural areas at risk for closure, these appropriations bills push for deeper cuts in programs critical to improving maternal and child health and well-being. This includes:

- **Cutting over \$1 billion from government programs that fund maternal and child health and improve women's health care**, including: a cut of \$886 million to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), a cut of \$185 million to maternal and child health programs and a cut of \$14 million for the Office on Women's Health.
- **Drastically cutting key health equity programs** such as a \$30 million cut for the Office of Minority Health and a \$35 million cut for the Minority HIV/AIDS Initiative.
- **Eliminating funding for multiple programs that support diversity in the health care workforce, including the Nursing Faculty Loan Program and the Nursing Workforce Diversity (NWD)**. Women are a [large share of the health care industry](#), though women and particularly women of color are underrepresented at the senior levels. Growth in the [health care](#) and social assistance sector will account for [nearly half \(45 percent\)](#) of all new jobs over the next decade. In 2021-22, NDW trained 10,981 students, two-thirds of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Eliminating funding for the Healthy Start program**, which works to improve maternal and infant health outcomes by providing support, education and care coordination before, during and after pregnancy.
- **Ending all funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**, which supports research to improve health care quality, address inequities, reduce costs, advance patient safety, decrease medical errors and broaden access to primary care and maternity care.

- **Slashing funding for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services by \$195 million.** The agency innovates and improves quality of care for Medicare and Medicaid enrollees nationwide – [over eighteen million adult women are enrolled in Medicaid](#) – the majority of adult beneficiaries. Women are also the [majority of Medicare](#) beneficiaries.

Reproductive Rights

The House Republican funding bill would further restrict access to abortion and reproductive health services, especially for low-income women and women of color, as well as young people, immigrants, people with disabilities and those living in rural areas. These proposed cuts come after Congress's relentless attacks on reproductive health care all year and would impact people's ability to access reproductive health care across the entire country. They include:

- **The discriminatory Hyde Amendment**, prohibiting Medicaid from covering abortion care, as well as the Weldon Amendment, which interferes with and undermines access to care.
- **Eliminating funding for Title X Family Planning**, which provides high-quality, culturally responsive family planning services to people with low or no incomes and people who are un- or under-insured, and prohibiting Title X health clinics from providing information on or referrals for abortion. In 2023, Title X served more than [2.8 million people](#).
- **Eliminating all federal funding for Planned Parenthood**, which provides critical reproductive health services to women across the country, with a particular focus on low-income women who may not be able to afford services elsewhere. In 2023, Planned Parenthood and its affiliates served [2.08 million patients](#).
- **Eliminating funding for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program**, which provides comprehensive sex education, while instead funding abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.
- **Blocking Biden Administration executive orders** that would protect access to abortion care following the *Dobbs* decision.
- **Prohibiting funding for postgraduate physician training programs** if a program provides training on abortion care, despite the [damaging impacts](#) of the *Dobbs* decision on the reproductive health care workforce.
- **Banning Medicaid from covering gender-affirming care.**

These extreme cuts in the House Republican funding bills would be devastating for women and people of color. They will only exacerbate the chaotic environments too many people across the country are now navigating to access basic health care, ensure healthy pregnancies, find fair workplaces, and make the healthiest and safest decisions for their families. Congress must reject

these cuts and instead invest in the programs outlined above so that women and their families have the health and economic security they need to thrive.

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.

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