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NCJW Condemns House Health Care Vote Against Abortion Rights

November 9, 2009, Washington, DC -- The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) today condemned passage by the House of Representatives of an amendment by Reps. Bart Stupak (D-MI) and Joseph Pitts (R-PA) to the Affordable Health Care for America Act (HR 3962) that would deprive millions of women of abortion coverage, including those who now have such insurance. NCJW President Nancy Ratzan released the following statement:

"There is much to be applauded in the historic health care reform bill passed by the House. The practice of charging women more for insurance would be eliminated as would the exclusion of pre-existing conditions. The bill promises insurance coverage to millions who do not have it or who are at risk of losing it. But make no mistake, the bill does not fully meet women's health needs because of a draconian abortion restriction amendment added at the last minute that would deprive millions of women access to abortion services.

"This Stupak-Pitts amendment is an egregious assault on the rights of women and an enormous step backward for those who believe in the separation of religion and state. It enshrines one religious view of abortion into law and enlists the federal government to enforce it. It jettisoned a compromise already worked out that would have maintained the status quo in regard to government funding for abortion care. The Stupak-Pitts amendment would apply a new far-reaching ban—barring women from even using their own funds to purchase comprehensive coverage that includes abortion services through the new insurance exchange. In doing so, this amendment ignores the reality that one in three women will in fact have an abortion by the time she reaches 45 years of age.

"The amendment instead would compel women to buy 'abortion riders' even though their availability is in doubt. This provision is alarmingly out of touch with the reality that women do not anticipate unintended or untenable pregnancies.

"NCJW pledges to fight to ensure that the Senate passes a clean bill free of the anti-abortion measure adopted by the House—a bill that truly meets the health care needs of all and that respects the health care decisions women must make."

The [National Council of Jewish Women](#) (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms.

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