

Thank you for hearing my comments today.

My name is Liz Gipson, I live in downtown Ithaca, and I work at Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes as the Director of Public Affairs.

Through living downtown and working at Planned Parenthood, I know that we Ithacans value equity, acceptance, and fairness and that we take great pride in being on the forefront of progressive campaigns for decades.

One of the resolutions in front of you today calls for the adoption of the EACH Woman Act. The EACH Woman Act would ensure that everyone who receives care or insurance through the federal government would have abortion coverage. It also prohibits politicians from interfering with the private insurance market to prevent insurance companies from providing abortion coverage. Every year since 1976 Congress has included the Hyde Amendment in federal appropriations legislation, thereby restricting Medicaid coverage for abortion care. Repealing this restriction would mean that lack of coverage would not stand in the way of a low-income woman making the decision she feels is best for her and her family.

We are lucky to live in New York, a state that opts to cover abortion for patients enrolled in Medicaid. Yet despite this, there are Ithacans who are insured through the federal government whose insurance does not cover abortion: veterans and armed service members on TRICARE, Peace Corps volunteers, Ithacans on Medicare, Native Americans who use Indian Health Services, federal government employees, and federal prisoners.

Together, the two measures of the EACH Woman Act would lift the bans on abortion coverage and ensure that all women have equal ability to make personal life decisions regardless of how much she earns, how she is insured, or where she lives.

The City of Ithaca has an opportunity to once again live our values and continue to be a progressive leader by becoming the ninth place in the country to pass such a resolution, joining localities including Travis County, TX, New York City, Seattle, and Chicago's Cook County.

Members of the Common Council, as we approach the 40th anniversary of the Hyde Amendment, I urge you continue our city's long-standing tradition of standing up for dignity and justice by passing the resolution.