



## CITY OF BOSTON

### RESOLUTION CALLING ON U.S. CONGRESS AND PRESIDENT OBAMA TO REINSTATE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR ABORTION SERVICES

- WHEREAS,** September 30, 2016 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> year of the federal Hyde Amendment, which denies women use of Medicaid insurance for abortion and represents the nexus of deeply entrenched economic injustice, racism, and gender inequity; and
- WHEREAS,** Cities around the country are using this anniversary to organize locally by passing resolutions in support of insurance coverage for abortion services during the Hyde Week of Action, which takes place from September 25<sup>th</sup>-October 1<sup>st</sup>; and
- WHEREAS,** Reproductive health is a vital component of a woman's overall health, and a woman's freedom to make reproductive decisions is vital to her safety, well-being, economic opportunity, and ability to participate equitably in society; and
- WHEREAS,** Every woman needs and deserves access to a range of safe, affordable, and comprehensive reproductive health care services throughout her life, including cancer and sexually transmitted infection screenings, contraceptive services, abortion care, prenatal care, and labor and delivery services; and
- WHEREAS,** On January 22, 1973, the United States Supreme Court, in a historic and landmark decision, ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that the U.S. Constitution safeguards a woman's ability to make her own personal medical decisions about when or whether to have children; and
- WHEREAS,** In the last 43 years, access to abortion care has allowed women to participate more fully in society, saved lives, and strengthened families; and
- WHEREAS,** The government, by partially or fully subsidizing health insurance and health care services for individuals who meet certain eligibility criteria, recognizes that health care is essential to an individual's ability to fully participate in her family, community, and society; and
- WHEREAS,** Health insurance, whether private or government funded, should cover the full range of a woman's options when she is pregnant, so that she is able to make the decision she deems best for her and her family without interference; and
- WHEREAS,** We must guard against efforts to deliberately erode the availability and affordability of abortion and undermine the protections provided by *Roe v. Wade*; and

- WHEREAS,** One such restriction is the Hyde Amendment, passed by Congress on September 30, 1976, which has, for nearly 40 years, denied abortion coverage for low-income women enrolled in the Medicaid health insurance program, significantly impeding their ability to access abortion; and
- WHEREAS,** The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and many other states offer vital health care services to fill the gap left by the federal Hyde Amendment by providing those enrolled in the state Medicaid plan with coverage for the full range of pregnancy-related services, including abortion; and
- WHEREAS,** Many women in Boston, as well as state and federal employees, Peace Corps members, and beneficiaries of the Indian Health Services and military insurance programs, obtain insurance coverage through other public insurance programs that also include restrictions that withhold coverage for abortion; and
- WHEREAS,** Laws that restrict insurance coverage of abortion can create insurmountable obstacles to quality health care; and
- WHEREAS,** When health insurance coverage for abortion is restricted, the harm falls hardest on those who already face significant barriers to receiving high-quality health care, such as low-income women, immigrant women, young women, women of color, and transgender, and gender-non-conforming people; and
- WHEREAS,** A woman who wants to get an abortion but is denied is more likely to fall into poverty than a woman who can get an abortion<sup>i</sup>; and
- WHEREAS,** The Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH) Woman Act was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in July 2015; and
- WHEREAS,** The EACH Woman Act would ensure coverage for abortion for every woman regardless of her income, insurance status, place of residence, and prohibits political interference with the decisions of private health insurance companies to offer coverage for abortion care; and
- WHEREAS,** It is imperative that funding of comprehensive reproductive health care be increased and that abortion be covered as part of comprehensive reproductive health care in all public insurance programs to ensure that services are accessible for women who are enrolled in such programs.
- NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**
- RESOLVED,** That the Boston City Council, in meeting assembled calls upon Congress and President Obama to support and reinstate insurance coverage for abortion services for women enrolled in public insurance programs by enacting the EACH Woman Act.

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<sup>i</sup> Reproductive Health Technologies Project (August 2015). *Two Sides of the Same Coin: Integrating Economic and Reproductive Justice*. Retrieved from <http://rhtp.org/abortion/documents/TwoSidesSameCoinReport.pdf>.