

For Immediate Release: November 20, 2017

Contact: info@newvoicespittsburgh.org

**Pittsburgh City Council Passes Will of Council
Supporting Insurance Coverage for Abortion Care**

*Pittsburgh is now the thirteenth to send a strong message in support of affordable access to
abortion care*

PITTSBURGH—Sending a strong signal in support of affordable access to health care, including abortion care, the Pittsburgh City Council today passed a Will of Council calling for state and federal funding of abortion coverage. The Will of Council was sponsored and strongly supported by Pittsburgh City Councilmember Natalia Rudiak and is the latest in a series of resolutions calling insurance coverage of abortion to be adopted by local governing bodies across the United States over the past four years.

For 41 years, politicians have used the Hyde Amendment, to deny coverage of abortion care for those enrolled in government-sponsored insurance programs, including low-income individuals who qualify for Medicaid, Native American women, and residents who serve in the military, volunteer for the Peace Corps, or are serving time in federal prison. While 17 states use their own funds to provide insurance coverage for abortion, Pennsylvania is not among them – and goes even further than the federal government by prohibiting insurance coverage of abortion on the state exchange.

Today's Will of Council calls on Congress to reinstate abortion service coverage for women enrolled in public insurance programs by enacting the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH Woman) Act, and calls on the Pennsylvania General Assembly to provide abortion coverage in public insurance programs in Pennsylvania and lift the ban on such coverage in private insurance plans sold through the Pennsylvania Health Insurance Exchange.

By taking its latest bold step, Pittsburgh is now the 13th locality and second city in Pennsylvania, after Philadelphia, to show its commitment to protecting the rights of women everywhere to have unhindered access to comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion care.

“Deciding to become a parent is a sacred decision for every woman. For some, this is a life and death question,” said **Councilmember and sponsor of the Will of Council, Natalia Rudiak.**

“Some politicians' efforts to strip birth control coverage and abortion access from insurance policies have created immense suffering and are denying low-income women the dignity to decide their own futures. If we are ever to achieve equity, women need to have decision-making power combined with full and complete access to all manner of reproductive health care.”

“At a time when politicians across the country—and in Washington, DC—have relentlessly sought to undermine the health and wellbeing of our communities, Pittsburgh has, once again stepped up as a leader in the struggle for justice,” said **Lexi White, Policy Manager of New Voices for Reproductive Justice**. “New Voices for Reproductive Justice fights boldly on behalf of Black women and girls to defend and our ability to have full agency over our bodies, gender and sexuality, work, and reproduction. For 41 years, lawmakers have punished low-income women and people of color by withholding coverage for abortion care, using the power of the purse to interfere in our personal decisions. Today, Pittsburgh joins 12 other localities in saying ‘no more.’ We’re proud to be working with our community and local leaders to create a future where all of our families can thrive and each of us can make our own decisions about pregnancy and parenting, and receive coverage for the full range of reproductive health care, including birth control and abortion, however much money we make.”

One in four women will get an abortion in her lifetime,” said **Jessica Semler, Director of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania**. “The most common reason women delay abortions is because obtaining the funds necessary to pay for the procedure takes time, making it even more expensive than it would be in earlier stages of pregnancy. Abortion should not be a privilege based on income level. It is healthcare. Healthcare is a human right. Today we are proud to stand in solidarity with New Voices for Reproductive Justice, Pittsburgh City Council and other abortion access activists to elevate the narrative that ALL women deserve access to abortion and comprehensive sex education.”

With this resolution, Pittsburgh joins the strong and growing movement underway to eliminate the unequal, harmful, and discriminatory policies that prey on vulnerable communities and have a disproportionate impact on low-income women, women of color, immigrant women, and young women. Since 2013, All* Above All and the National Institute for Reproductive Health have partnered with local advocates across the country to pass resolutions that boldly state support for abortion coverage and call on federal and state elected officials to reinstate the abortion coverage that has been denied to some women since 1976.

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“The ability to decide whether and when to become a parent should not depend on zip code, income level, or source of insurance,” said **Andrea Miller, President of the National Institute**

for Reproductive Health. “Through this resolution, Pittsburgh is both standing up for all communities’ access affordable abortion care, and exemplifying what it means to be a leader in local reproductive health policy. This is exactly the kind of proactive, forward-thinking action we need from city councils, mayors, and advocates across the country. We applaud New Voices and the Pittsburgh City Council for boldly working to lift the bans that deny abortion coverage.”

Among the localities that have passed similar proclamations are Boston; Cambridge, Mass.; Cook County, Ill.; Ithaca, NY; Los Angeles; Madison, Wis.; New York; Philadelphia (Board of Health); Philadelphia (City Council); San Francisco; Seattle; Travis County, Texas; Multnomah County, Ore. – and now Pittsburgh.

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New Voices for Reproductive Justice is a Human Rights organization dedicated to the health and well-being of Black women and girls and women of color in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Since 2004, New Voices has served 50,000+ women of color through leadership development, community organizing, policy advocacy and culture change. Our priority issue areas are Reproductive Justice, LGBTQ Rights, Health Care Access, Ending Gender-Based Violence, Incarceration, Environmental Justice and Integrated Voter Engagement.

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