

September 21, 2011

Dear Senator or Representative,

The undersigned organizations, on behalf of our millions of members and supporters, write today to express our strong opposition to the addition of policy riders in legislation that will fund government operations for Fiscal Year 2012.

H.R. 1, the Continuing Appropriations bill for FY 2011, as originally passed in the House included more than 400 riders with far-reaching policy implications. These riders on budget legislation have been part of a continuing pattern of assault on public health, worker safety, consumer, women's rights and health, D.C. home rule, and environmental programs during the 112th Congress.

The extraneous riders advanced last spring were proposed by those intent on wiping out years of careful analysis based on broad public and stakeholder input, and received fewer than a few minutes of consideration by Congress. In fact, the final budget deal was negotiated by only a couple of decision-makers in the hours before a government-wide shutdown. This extortionist and back-room means of legislating did not allow for adequate debate on the merits of these numerous and sweeping policy proposals.

As the legislative components of the budget agreement move forward, either through the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction or through the FY2012 appropriations process, including any omnibus budget bill or continuing resolution, we insist that these budget bills deal with the budget exclusively, and that Congress not use must-pass appropriations and budget legislation as cover for ill-conceived policy changes to undermine needed protections and rights.

Insertion of policy riders in unrelated legislation is a tactic opposed by groups across the political spectrum. Indeed, the 2010 Republican "Promise to America" included a promise not to package controversial legislation on must-pass legislation, but instead to "advance major legislation one issue at a time."

Responsibly addressing the national deficit without cuts to needed programs is difficult enough. Lawmakers must not be distracted by a sideshow debate over far-reaching policy riders that have little, if anything, to do with the deficit, and jeopardize the health and well-being of all Americans.

Signed,

9to5, National Association of Working
Women
AARP
Abortion Care Network
Advocates for Youth
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
AIDS United
Alaska Wilderness League

Alliance for Justice
Alliance to End Hunger
American Association of University Women
(AAUW)
The American Federation of State, County,
and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Medical Student Association
American Rivers

Americans for UNFPA
Anna House
Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health
Forum
ATTIC, Inc.
Black Women's Health Imperative
BlueGreen Alliance
Catholics for Choice
Cedar River Clinics
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for the Celebration of Creation
Center for Food Safety
Center for Independent Living of South
Florida, Inc.
Center for Reproductive Rights
Chicago Abortion Fund
Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future
(PennFuture)
Clean Water Action
Coalition on Human Needs
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
Community Food Security Coalition
Connections Consulting
Courage Campaign
DC Abortion Fund
DC Federation of Business & Professional
Women
DC For Democracy (DCFD)
DC Vote
Defenders of Wildlife
Disciples Justice Action Network
Downwinders at Risk, Dallas, Texas
Earth Day Network
Earthjustice
Emergency Medical Assistance, Inc.
Environment America
Environmental Integrity Project
EQUAL Health Network
Feminist Majority
The Freedom Fund
Fresh Energy
Friends of the Earth
Generational Alliance
GLSEN: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education
Network
Greater Washington Urban League
Greenpeace
Hartford Gyn Center

Health Care Without Harm
Heartland Alliance for Human Needs &
Human Rights
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health
The International Center for Technology
Assessment
Ipas
It's Your Choice Fund
JCEO
Jewish Women International
Just Harvest
Kentucky Environmental Foundation
Law Students for Reproductive Justice
League of Conservation Voters
Legal Momentum
Lilith Fund
Maternal and Child Health Access
Mautner Project
Medical Students for Choice
Minnesota Center for Environmental
Advocacy
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Abortion Federation
National Asian Pacific American Women's
Forum (NAPAWF)
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in
Women's Health (NPWH)
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Health Law Program
National Employment Law Project
National Latina Institute for Reproductive
Health
National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC)
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Women's Conference Committee
National Women's Health Network
Natural Resources Defense Council
Network for Reproductive Options
Nevada County Citizens for Choice, Inc.
New Mexico Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice

Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Northern California InAlliance
Oceana
OMB Watch
Philadelphia Women's Center
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and
Health
Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan
Washington, DC
Pro-Choice Resources
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care
We Need
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Religious Institute
Reproductive Health Access Project
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
The Sargent Shriver National Center on
Poverty Law
Save Our Rivers
Save the Dunes
Sexuality Information and Education Council
of the United States (SIECUS)
Sierra Club
Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Suburban Primary Health Care Council
Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social
Justice
Third Wave Foundation
Trust Women Fund
Trust Women/Silver Ribbon Campaign
Union of Concerned Scientists
Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations
U.S. Labor Against War (USLAW)
U.S. PIRG
Voices for Illinois Children
WHEAT
Wider Opportunities for Women
The Wilderness Society
Women's Reproductive Rights Assistance
Project (WRRAP)
YWCA USA

