

# Twenty-Eight Faith-Based Organizations Express Support for the Women's Health Protection Act

May 12, 2016

US Senate  
US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC

Dear Member of Congress,

As national faith-based and religious organizations that work to ensure every person in the United States has affordable access to safe, high-quality healthcare, including reproductive healthcare, we write to express our strong support for HR 448/S 217, the Women's Health Protection Act.

**The Women's Health Protection Act is urgently needed.** In the last several years, state legislatures have enacted more laws restricting abortion access than in the entire preceding decade. This egregious trend has resulted in large swaths of the country losing access to safe, timely abortion care. The Women's Health Protection Act is a critical bill which would enact protections on the federal level to ensure the right of every individual to make their own decisions about whether and when to have children. Rather than face current barriers due to their economic status, employment status, or zip code, this bill would ensure each person can make a decision about abortion led by their own conscience, faith, or moral beliefs. It would invalidate state laws designed to restrict abortion access and make it more difficult to pass such laws in the future. And it would ensure that medical providers are able to care for patients who seek comprehensive reproductive health care.

**Protecting safe, legal access to abortion is a moral imperative, rooted in our deeply-held beliefs in social justice, women's moral agency and religious liberty for all.** As people of faith, we value every person as a moral decision-maker who is free to make personal decisions about their reproductive lives based on their own beliefs and conscience. The Women's Health Protection Act is critical legislation that embodies these shared ideals. .

**Our faith traditions compel us to speak out for social justice and the right of every person to make their own, personal decisions concerning their reproductive health and their families.** We are committed to ensuring equity and justice for the most marginalized members of our society, especially those with limited financial means or those who live in areas without access to services. Laws that eliminate options for some based on their geographic location are profoundly unjust, most harming low-income women, women of color, and women in rural areas. We cannot stand idly by as state laws transform our country into a map of "haves and have-nots" with regard to access to reproductive health services.

**We believe that women are moral agents who have the capacity, right and responsibility to make their own decisions.** Every woman deserves the right to reproductive autonomy, no matter where she lives, her faith tradition or moral beliefs, or how much money she has. Similarly, qualified medical professionals whose beliefs compel them to provide abortion care deserve protection for their conscience-based decisions to serve their communities. Laws that limit the availability of abortion disrespect women's human dignity, erode their constitutional rights, and can have far-reaching health and economic consequences on women and families. They also ignore the moral agency of physicians who seek to provide compassionate care.

**We affirm that every woman has a right to religious liberty, which is integrally bound to her reproductive freedom.** Religious liberty includes the right to follow one's own faith or moral code in making critical, personal reproductive health decisions, without politicians interfering. While we respect the right of every individual, including our lawmakers, to hold their own personal and religious beliefs, our faith traditions and our country's constitution demand that no one impose a single religious viewpoint on all through civil law or regulation.

Every day, we stand as people of faith who support equal, fair and comprehensive access to women's health care and respect for personal decision making. **We support the Women's Health Protection Act as a means to this end and urge you and your colleagues to do the same.** We ask this based on our diverse faith traditions and because protecting the health and well-being of women and families is the right thing to do.

Respectfully,

A Critical Mass: Women Celebrating Eucharist  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
Catholics for Choice  
Chicago Women-Church  
Clergy Advocacy Board of Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
CORPUS  
Disciples Justice Action Network  
Episcopal Women's Caucus  
Global Justice Institute (MCC)  
Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc.  
Jewish Women International  
Keshet  
Methodist Federation for Social Action  
Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC)  
Muslims for Progressive Values  
National Coalition of American Nuns (NCAN)  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Rabbinical Assembly  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and Jewish Reconstructionist Communities  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of Connecticut, Inc.  
Religious Institute  
Society for Humanistic Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER)  
Women's League for Conservative Judaism  
Women's Ordination Conference

*For more information, please contact Amy Cotton at (202) 375-5067 or [amy@ncjwdc.org](mailto:amy@ncjwdc.org), or Sara Hutchinson Ratcliffe at (202) 986-6093 or [shratcliffe@catholicsforchoice.org](mailto:shratcliffe@catholicsforchoice.org).*