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Press Release

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JOE PITTS MUST GO! SPEECH BY JOANNE TOSTI-VASEY AT RALLY TO PROTEST THE STUPAK PITTS AMENDMENT

WEST CHESTER, PA, NOVEMBER 21, 2009: We are here today to express our outrage and anger at Joe Pitts for co-authoring an amendment to the health care reform. Rather than expanding health care coverage to all, Pitts' amendment is clearly designed to deny full, lawful reproductive health care to half of the population.

On November 7th, the US House of Representatives passed HR 3962, their weakened version of health care reform. This bill took three blows against true health care reform prior to final passage. First, they weakened the public option to a public exchange program. Then they eliminated the Kucinich amendment that allows states to craft their own single-payer health care plans (which PA is now considering). Finally, the House trashed health care for women by including the Stupak-Pitts amendment.

The Stupak-Pitts amendment was co-authored by one the members of the PA Congressional delegation - Joe Pitts - who lives here in Chester County. This amendment denies access to abortion services to most women in the United States. Under this amendment, a woman will be denied abortion coverage in her health insurance plan if she either uses the "public option" OR if she receives any subsidy whatsoever to purchase health insurance from private insurers.

In addition, even if just one woman in the group plan uses a subsidy, every woman in that private health care insurance plan will be denied abortion coverage. Why? Because this amendment

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states that no plan can include abortion services if any one person receives a subsidy.

So now ALL lower- and middle-class women will be completely denied access to the full spectrum of reproductive health care. BTW, this restriction may also include access to emergency contraception and other forms of birth control because of how the right wing defines abortion.

Unfortunately 13 of Joe Pitt's colleagues from Pennsylvania also voted for this amendment. The votes of these 14 Representatives are, in our opinion, a vote to once again send women to the back alleys for an abortion.

There were only five PA Representatives who voted against this amendment. Pennsylvania NOW would like to publicly thank these five members of Congress for standing up for comprehensive health care and for the lives of women. They are:

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|-----------------------|-----------|
| Rep. Bob Brady | (D) PA 1 |
| Rep. Chaka Fattah | (D) PA 2 |
| Rep. Patrick Murphy | (D) PA 8 |
| Rep. Allyson Schwartz | (D) PA 13 |
| Rep. Joe Sestak | (D) PA 7 |

We are outraged at this attempt by Joe Pitts to deny women full, lawful, and comprehensive health care.

Joe Pitts, you are out of touch with reality. You are continuing to use your religion and voting power to hurt women and families throughout the 16th Congressional District as well as people across the entire country.

We will remember in November 2010! Joe Pitts, one of these ways that we will remember is by working very hard to replace you in Congress. With the help of all of the people present here today as well as with the help of NOW and people throughout the district, we will hand you your pink slip on Tuesday, November 2, 2010 when the voters in the 16th Congressional District hire my friend and mentor, Lois Herr to replace you.

And for more on this, I'd like to now introduce Terry O'Neill, the national president of the National Organization for Women.

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