

May 15, 2018

Alexander M. Azar II  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

We would like to express our support of the Title X family planning program and our strong opposition to any plans to reinstate the “domestic gag rule,” which imposes restrictions on Title X providers and restricts access to affordable, quality, and lifesaving health care in communities across the country.

As you know, Title X is the only federal grant program dedicated to providing family planning services to low-income and otherwise underserved individuals. Each year, Title X offers roughly four million women and men confidential, medically accurate, and evidence-based care. With services ranging from cancer screenings to well-woman exams, Title X providers ensure their patients receive the highest standard of medical care. As every federal dollar invested in Title X saves Medicaid more than seven dollars, this is also a program that taxpayers can—and do—believe in.

In keeping with longstanding legal, ethical, and medical standards of health care, Title X providers offer patients medically accurate counseling on and referrals for all pregnancy options—including parenting, adoption and abortion. The Title X program has never funded abortion services at its health centers, and health centers that receive Title X funds to provide family planning care may also separately provide abortions using non-federal funds.

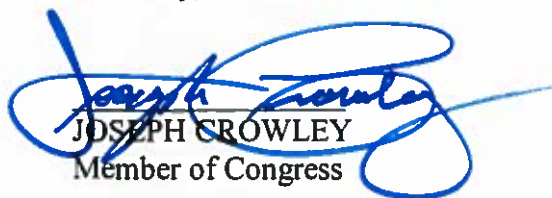
In spite of the critical role that Title X plays in promoting the health and well-being of millions of people, President Trump has indicated he plans to dramatically reduce its reach by reinstating the “domestic gag rule.” This rule would prevent health care providers from receiving Title X funding if they even mention abortion or abortion-related services to their patients. The domestic gag rule would effectively restrict the ability of patients to receive medical counseling on abortion and make informed decisions about their own reproductive health. On top of the ban on counseling and referrals, the 'gag rule' would impose additional requirements intended to bar providers from participating in Title X that also separately provide abortion services. This would have a devastating effect on the millions of Americans who rely on Title X for basic health needs, and it would have a particularly disproportionate impact on low-income individuals and communities of color.

Reinstating the domestic gag rule is nothing more than an opportunity for President Trump to fulfill his pledge to “defund Planned Parenthood,” whose health centers serve 40 percent of Title X patients and remain an essential part of the family planning safety net. Additionally, other providers of Title X-funded care would face immense challenges in attempting to absorb the patients that would lose access to care through Planned Parenthood.

Finally, a “domestic gag rule” could reverse progress made in critical areas. Primarily, unintended pregnancy rates in the U.S.—including those among teenagers—have been declining.<sup>1</sup> In 2015 alone, the contraceptive services supported by Title X helped women avoid 822,000 unintended pregnancies, which would have resulted in 387,000 unplanned births and 278,000 abortions. Cutting access to eligible providers would only pare back access to contraceptive services.

We strongly oppose efforts to undermine the integrity of the Title X program and harm the millions of people who rely on it for care. Federal health policy should be evidence-based and produced with the best interests of patients in mind. It should not be the result of the political whims of a partisan campaign pledge.


Sincerely,



JOSEPH CROWLEY  
Member of Congress



NITA M. LOWEY  
Member of Congress



BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress



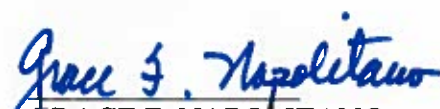
DIANA DeGETTE  
Member of Congress



DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.  
Member of Congress



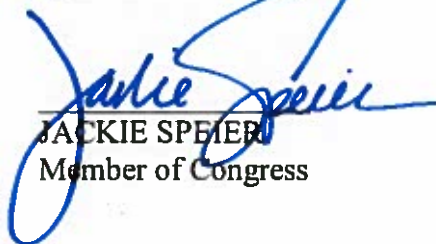
ROSA L. DeLAURO  
Member of Congress



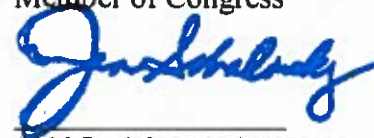
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO  
Member of Congress



STEVE COHEN  
Member of Congress



JACKIE SPEIER  
Member of Congress



JAN D. SCHAKOWSKY  
Member of Congress

---

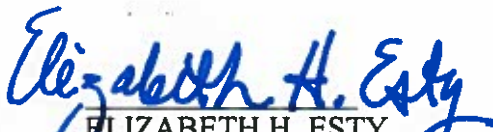
<sup>1</sup> Finer LB and Zolna MR. Declines in unintended pregnancy in the United States, 2008–2011. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2016, 374 (9): 843–852. (online at <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMsa1506575>).

  
THEODORE E. DEUTCH  
Member of Congress

  
JULIA BROWNLEY  
Member of Congress

  
BRIAN HIGGINS  
Member of Congress

  
ALAN LOWENTHAL  
Member of Congress

  
ELIZABETH H. ESTY  
Member of Congress

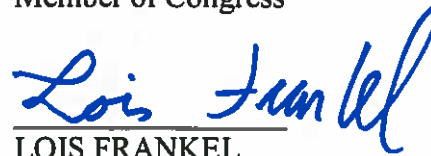
  
BEN RAY LUJAN  
Member of Congress


  
ROBERT A. BRADY  
Member of Congress


  
WILLIAM LACY CLAY  
Member of Congress

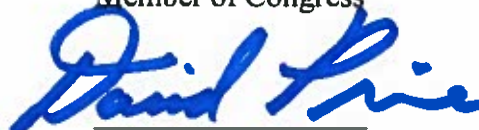
  
AMI BERA, M.D.  
Member of Congress


  
BILL FOSTER  
Member of Congress

  
LOIS FRANKEL  
Member of Congress

  
MIKE QUIGLEY  
Member of Congress

  
SEAN PATRICK MALONEY  
Member of Congress

  
DAVID E. PRICE  
Member of Congress

  
FREDERICA S. WILSON  
Member of Congress

  
ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Member of Congress

  
YVETTE D. CLARKE  
Member of Congress

  
MARCIA L. FUDGE  
Member of Congress

*Marcia L. Fudge*

MARCIA L. FUDGE  
Member of Congress

*Salud O. Carbajal*

SALUD O. CARBAJAL  
Member of Congress

*Peter A. DeFazio*

PETER A. DeFAZIO  
Member of Congress

*C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger*

C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER  
Member of Congress

*Anthony G. Brown*

ANTHONY G. BROWN  
Member of Congress

*Jimmy Gomez*

JIMMY GOMEZ  
Member of Congress

*Eleanor H. Norton*

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON  
Member of Congress

*Al Green*

AL GREEN  
Member of Congress

*Mike Doyle*

MIKE DOYLE  
Member of Congress

*John Lewis*

JOHN LEWIS  
Member of Congress

*Linda F. Sánchez*

LINDA SÁNCHEZ  
Member of Congress

*Tony Cardenas*

TONY CARDENAS  
Member of Congress

*Nydia Velázquez*

NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ  
Member of Congress

*Adam Smith*

ADAM SMITH  
Member of Congress

*Lisa Blunt Rochester*

LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER  
Member of Congress

*Mark Pocan*

MARK POCAN  
Member of Congress

*Peter Welch*

PETER WELCH  
Member of Congress

*Dina Titus*

DINA TITUS  
Member of Congress

*Keith Ellison*

KEITH ELLISON  
Member of Congress

*Michelle Lujan Grisham*

MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM  
Member of Congress

*Judy Chu*

JUDY CHU  
Member of Congress

*PrAMILA JayAPAL*

PRAMILA JAYAPAL  
Member of Congress

*Michael E. Capuano*

MICHAEL E. CAPUANO  
Member of Congress

*Carolyn B. Maloney*

CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress

*Jerry McNerney*

JERRY McNERNEY  
Member of Congress

*Katherine M. Clark*

KATHERINE M. CLARK  
Member of Congress

*Kathy Castor*

KATHY CASTOR  
Member of Congress

*Earl Blumenauer*

EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress

*Adam B. Schiff*

ADAM B. SCHIFF  
Member of Congress

*Adriano Espallat*

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT  
Member of Congress

*Andre Carson*

ANDRÉ CARSON  
Member of Congress

*Danny K. Davis*

DANNY K. DAVIS  
Member of Congress

*Raja Krishnamoorthi*

RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY  
Member of Congress

*David N. Cicilline*

DAVID N. CICILLINE  
Member of Congress

*Ted W. Lieu*

TED LIEU  
Member of Congress

*Debbie Wasserman Schultz*

DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ  
Member of Congress



ANNA G. ESHOO  
Member of Congress



BRENDA L. LAWRENCE  
Member of Congress



BETTY McCOLLUM  
Member of Congress



JARED POLIS  
Member of Congress



DORIS MATSUI  
Member of Congress



TIM RYAN  
Member of Congress



JUAN VARGAS  
Member of Congress



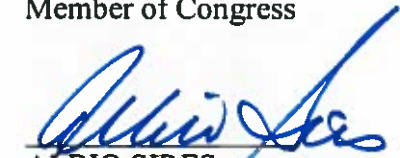
MARCY KAPTUR  
Member of Congress



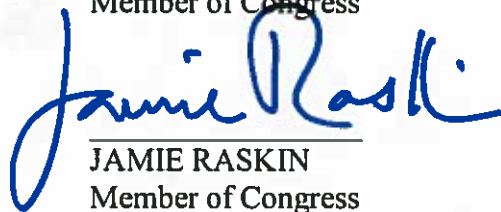
DARREN SOTO  
Member of Congress



RICK LARSEN  
Member of Congress



ALBIO SIRES  
Member of Congress



JAMIE RASKIN  
Member of Congress



LUIS V. GUTIERREZ  
Member of Congress



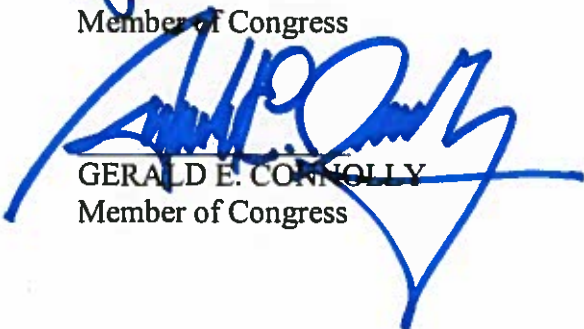
MIKE THOMPSON  
Member of Congress



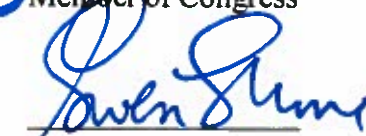
KYRSTEN SINEMA  
Member of Congress



JAMES P. McGOVERN  
Member of Congress



GERALD E. CONNOLLY  
Member of Congress



GWEN MOORE  
Member of Congress



SETH MOULTON  
Member of Congress



ALCEE L. HASTINGS  
Member of Congress



JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress



RAÚL M. GRIJALVA  
Member of Congress



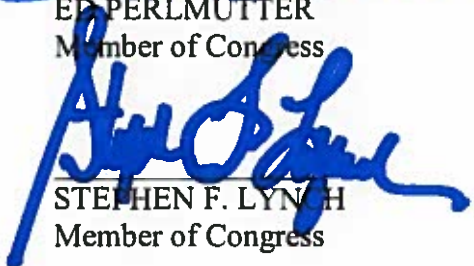
JOHN P. SARBANES  
Member of Congress



ZOE LOFGREN  
Member of Congress



ED PERLMUTTER  
Member of Congress



STEPHEN F. LYNCH  
Member of Congress



CHARLIE CRIST  
Member of Congress



TERROL NADLER  
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress



ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS  
Member of Congress



LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD  
Member of Congress



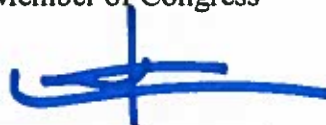
JOSÉ E. SERRANO  
Member of Congress



DAVID SCOTT  
Member of Congress



CHELLIE PINGREE  
Member of Congress



COLLEEN HANABUSA  
Member of Congress



JAMES R. LANGEVIN  
Member of Congress



RICHARD M. NOLAN  
Member of Congress



NIKI TSONGAS  
Member of Congress



TERRI A. SEWELL  
Member of Congress



SUZAN K. DELBENE  
Member of Congress



VAL DEMINGS  
Member of Congress



DEBBIE DINGELL  
Member of Congress



HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.  
Member of Congress



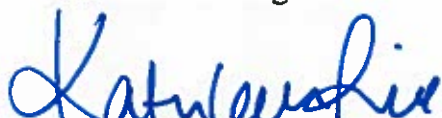
JACKY ROSEN  
Member of Congress



SUZANNE BONAMICI  
Member of Congress



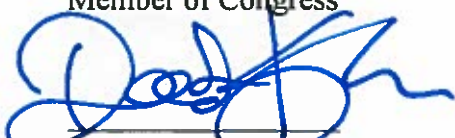
BOBBY RUSH  
Member of Congress



KATHLEEN M. RICE  
Member of Congress



KAREN BASS  
Member of Congress



DEREK KILMER  
Member of Congress



G.K. BUTTERFIELD  
Member of Congress



JARED HUFFMAN  
Member of Congress



PAUL TONKO  
Member of Congress



BRENDAN F. BOYLE  
Member of Congress



HAKEEM JEFFRIES  
Member of Congress



*Pete Aguilar*

PETE AGUILAR  
Member of Congress

*Raul Ruiz*

RAUL RUIZ  
Member of Congress

*Matthew A Cartwright*

MATT CARTWRIGHT  
Member of Congress

*Donald S Beyer, Jr.*

DONALD S. BEYER, JR.  
Member of Congress

*Bradley S. Schneider*

BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER  
Member of Congress

*Kurt Schrader*

KURT SCHRADER  
Member of Congress

*Daniel T. Kildee*

DANIEL T. KILDEE  
Member of Congress

*Joseph P. Kennedy, III*

JOSEPH P. KENNEDY, III  
Member of Congress

*Eddie Bernice Johnson*

EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON  
Member of Congress

*A. Donald Mceachin*

A. DONALD MCEACHIN  
Member of Congress

*Robert C. "Bobby" Scott*

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT  
Member of Congress

*Tom O'Halleran*

TOM O'HALLERAN  
Member of Congress

*Lloyd Doggett*

LLOYD DOGGETT  
Member of Congress

*Carol Shea-Porter*

CAROL SHEA-PORTER  
Member of Congress

*Scott Peters*

SCOTT PETERS  
Member of Congress

*John Garamendi*

JOHN GARAMENDI  
Member of Congress

*Beto O'Rourke*

BETO O'ROURKE  
Member of Congress

*Ann McLane Kuster*

ANN McLANE KUSTER  
Member of Congress



STACEY E. PLASKETT  
Member of Congress



JOHN K. DELANEY  
Member of Congress



MARC VEASEY  
Member of Congress



RO KHANNA  
Member of Congress



WILLIAM R. KEATING  
Member of Congress



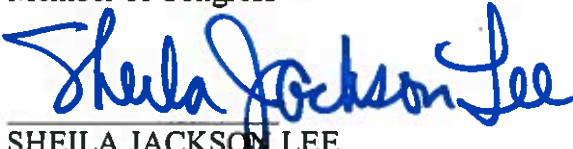
MARK DeSAULNIER  
Member of Congress



SANDER M. LEVIN  
Member of Congress



JOHN A. YARMUTH  
Member of Congress



SHEILA JACKSON LEE  
Member of Congress



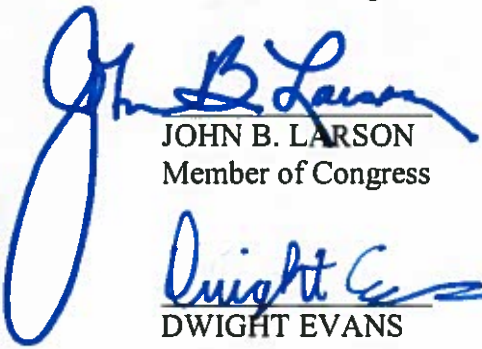
GENE GREEN  
Member of Congress



DENNY HECK  
Member of Congress



BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN  
Member of Congress



JOHN B. LARSON  
Member of Congress



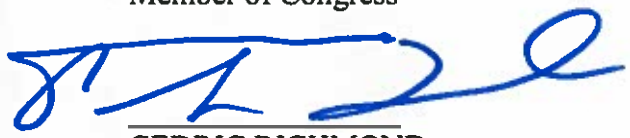
JIM HIMES  
Member of Congress



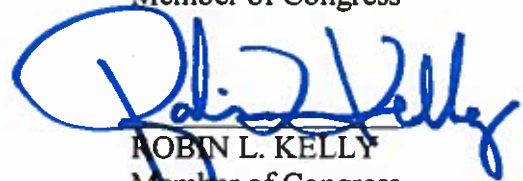
DWIGHT EVANS  
Member of Congress



RON KIND  
Member of Congress



CEDRIC RICHMOND  
Member of Congress



ROBIN L. KELLY  
Member of Congress

*Alma Adams*

ALMA S. ADAMS  
Member of Congress

*Cheri Bustos*

CHERI BUSTOS  
Member of Congress

*Jim Cooper*

JIM COOPER  
Member of Congress

*Eric Swalwell*

ERIC SWALWELL  
Member of Congress

*Joyce Beatty*

JOYCE BEATTY  
Member of Congress

*Dave Loebsack*

DAVE LOEBSACK  
Member of Congress

*Frank Pallone, Jr.*

FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
Member of Congress

*Nanette Diaz Barragan*

NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGAN  
Member of Congress

*Josh Gottheimer*

JOSH GOTTHEIMER  
Member of Congress

*Ruben Kihuen*

RUBEN KIHUEN  
Member of Congress

*Emanuel Cleaver, II*

EMANUEL CLEAVER, II  
Member of Congress

*Norma J. Torres*

NORMA J. TORRES  
Member of Congress

*Susan A. Davis*

SUSAN A. DAVIS  
Member of Congress