



AP(Eye) on The Hill

NAPAWF's monthly policy newsletter

February 2009 edition

www.napawf.org

In this edition:

From Capitol Hill

- [House Introduces Legislation to Adopt Humane and Enforceable Standards for Immigration Detention Facilities](#)
- [Congress Introduces Bill to Allow Same-Sex Family Immigration](#)
- [House Bill Seeks to Allow Family-Centered Considerations in Immigration Law](#)

Administration Watch

- [Obama Signs Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act into Law](#)
- [Gov. Sebelius Accepts HHS Secretary Nomination After Daschle Withdraws](#)
- [President Obama Publishes Budget Plan Outlining Principles for Health Care Reform](#)
- [Economic Stimulus Signed into Law](#)

- [NAPAWF Submits Petition of Individuals Opposed to the HPV Vaccination Mandate on Immigrants to the CDC](#)
- [Obama Administration Announces Plans to Rescind the HHS Provider Conscience Regulations](#)

From Capitol Hill

House Introduces Legislation to Adopt Humane and Enforceable Standards for Immigration Detention Facilities

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) introduced H.R. 1215, the [Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act](#), which would codify basic standards for providing treatment and care for immigration detainees including access to medical care, phones, legal materials, and law libraries. It also ensures protections for unaccompanied children, sexual abuse survivors, survivors of torture, families with children and other vulnerable populations. Currently, immigration detention centers are not subject to legally binding regulations, which has led to system-wide abuses and detainee deaths due to inadequate medical attention. For immigrant women, the lack of enforceable standards has created [reproductive injustices](#) and other barriers to needed [reproductive health care](#).

[Back to top](#)

Congress Introduces Bill to Allow Same-Sex Family Immigration

On Valentine's Day, Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) and Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) introduced the [Uniting American Families Act](#) (H.R. 1024/S. 424). If passed and signed into law, the legislation would allow LGBTQ U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to sponsor their same-sex partner in the same manner as heterosexual partners for immigration purposes.

[Back to top](#)

House Bill Seeks to Allow Family-Centered Considerations in Immigration Law

Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY) introduced the "[Child Citizenship Protection Act](#)" (H.R. 182), which would repeal a 1996 immigration provision and allow immigration judges to consider whether the deportation of a parent placed in deportation proceedings is in the "best interests of a U.S. citizen child." Opponents are characterizing the legislation as the "Anchor Baby Bill."

[Back to top](#)

Administration Watch

Obama Signs Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act into Law

On February 4, President Obama signed the [Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009](#) (CHIPRA) into law. CHIPRA not only reauthorizes the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), but expands coverage to additional children in families who cannot afford health insurance and are not eligible for Medicaid. The SCHIP program has provided needed health care coverage for 6.6 million low-income children, and CHIPRA will extend coverage for 4 million more. In the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, the percentage of children without insurance dropped from 18 to 8 percent in 2004 under SCHIP.

CHIPRA also includes the [Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act](#) (ICHIA), a provision that gives states the option to remove the 5-year bar and restore access to publically funded health care for thousands of low-income immigrant children and expectant mothers. ICHIA is an important first step to removing the 5-year waiting period for lawfully-residing immigrant children and pregnant women to become eligible for Medicaid and SCHIP. NAPAWF, as a co-convenor of the National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights, lead a [sign-on effort](#) to encourage Senators to vote for a children's health bill that included ICHIA.

[Back to top](#)

Gov. Sebelius Accepts HHS Secretary Nomination After Daschle Withdraws

On February 28th, [Kathleen Sebelius, Governor of Kansas \(D\), accepted President Obama's nomination to be Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services](#) (HHS). Her nomination comes weeks after former Senator [Tom Daschle withdrew his nomination](#), citing his failure to pay \$146,000 in taxes as his reason. In her role as Governor of Kansas, Sebelius pushed for expanded access to healthcare for children and served as the state's Insurance Commissioner for eight years. In addition, Gov. Sebelius vetoed several anti-choice measures, signed a bill allowing undocumented

students who win admission to state colleges to pay state tuition, and opposed a state constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages.

[Back to top](#)

Obama Publishes Budget Plan Outlining His Principles for Health Care Reform

On February 26th, President Obama released his budget outline for 2010, which, among other things, sets forth his plans for health care reform. In his budget, Obama laid the groundwork for his goal of universal healthcare. Some of the proposed [health care budget provisions](#) include a ten-year, \$634 billion "reserve fund" for health care reform, an expansion of Medicaid family planning services, funding for evidence-based comprehensive sex education, and commitments to expand preventive health care in the U.S. and abroad, including new resources for HIV/AIDS programs and international family planning.

The House passed an omnibus spending bill for FY 2009 on February 25. The Senate came up short on the 60 votes needed to advance its version last week. Its spending bill has also been subject to several [anti-choice amendments](#).

[Back to top](#)

Economic Stimulus Signed into Law

On February 17th, President Obama signed the *Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act*, popular known as the "[economic stimulus package](#)" into law. The \$787 billion stimulus plan includes a large package of federal spending and tax cuts designed to revive the economy and save millions of jobs. Notably, efforts to mandate the use of E-verify, an anti-immigrant worker verification program, failed.

[Back to top](#)

NAPAWF Submits Petition of Individuals Opposed to the HPV Vaccination Mandate on Immigrants to the CDC

In July 2008, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) added five

[new vaccinations](#) to the list of required immunizations for immigrants seeking legal permanent residency in the U.S. or applying for immigrant visas. The list included a vaccination against the human papillomavirus (HPV), a viral infection that is transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact and is the leading cause of cervical cancer. Following a recommendation by the CDC's Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices to administer the vaccine for girls and young women ages 11-26, the recommendation became an automatic requirement for prospective immigrants and naturalized citizens when the government updated its list of vaccines in July.

NAPAWF is leading a working group of immigrant rights, reproductive justice and public health advocates to reverse the mandate. In January, NAPAWF spearheaded and sent an [organizational sign-on letter](#) to the CDC. In February, as a follow-up to the letter, NAPAWF sent the CDC a [petition](#) signed by over 1,000 individuals urging the CDC to remove the HPV vaccination mandate on immigrants. NAPAWF will continue to gather petition signatures until the mandate is reversed.

ACTION ALERT!

Reproductive justice for immigrant women and girls is at stake! Tell the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reverse the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination mandate for immigrant women and girls.

Please sign the [petition](#).

[Back to top](#)

Obama Administration Announces Plans to Rescind the HHS Provider Conscience Regulations

In December 2008, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) made the proposed "Provider Conscience" regulations final despite receiving an unprecedented 200,000 comments in opposition to the proposed regulations. During the public comment period for the proposed regulations, NAPAWF submitted [joint comments](#) along with the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health and the Center for Reproductive Rights in opposition to the proposed regulations.

The regulations went into effect January 20, 2009, just one day before President Obama took office. The current regulations provide broad new job protections for health providers who refuse to provide services they find objectionable. In February, the [Obama Administration announced plans to](#)

[rescind the "Provider Conscience" regulations](#). The new proposed regulations will be introduced and open for a 30 day public comment period.

[Back to top](#)

To learn more about these issues or NAPAWF's work, please contact [Priscilla](#).