



FROM CAPITOL HILL

Health Reform Efforts Still Underway

On February 22, the President [released](#) his proposal for health care reform. Drawing largely from the bill that [passed](#) in the Senate in late December 2009, the President's proposal aims to make insurance more accessible and affordable, prohibits certain abuses practiced by the insurance industry, and includes an individual mandate to carry health insurance. The proposal does not include a government-run health insurance plan. Unfortunately, the President's proposal does nothing to change the problematic [Nelson amendment](#) that was included in the Senate bill, which would allow politically-conservative states to deny women any abortion coverage in private insurance purchased through exchanges. In more politically-progressive states that do permit abortion coverage, women or their partners (or their employers) would have to make two payments each month for a standard insurance policy: one for abortion coverage and one for everything else. If Congress adopts the President's health reform proposal, this restriction on abortion access would remain intact. NAPAWF opposes this measure because it would create unnecessary administrative costs, stigmatize a legal medical procedure and could lead to violations of individual privacy because anti-choice insurance or bank employees processing premium checks would know who is buying abortion coverage. Moreover, we fear insurers will simply stop offering abortion coverage, rather than comply with the burdensome two-check system. The President's proposal was meant to inform discussions during the bipartisan summit on health care reform, to take place between Democratic and Republican congressional leaders on February 25. The President called for the meeting in order to hear ideas from both sides of the aisles in an effort to get reform passed. Earlier this month, Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) wrote a [letter](#) to Majority Leader Harry Reid urging the Senate to pass health reform that includes a public health insurance option under budget reconciliation rules, a type of procedural vote that requires 50 votes to pass in the Senate. As of today, over 20 Senators have signed the letter.

» **TAKE ACTION: Stand up with us for women's health.**

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Update

Comprehensive immigration reform is underway! NAPAWF, as a steering committee member of the [National Coalition for Immigrant Women's Rights](#), is teaming up with [Reform Immigration for America](#) to mobilize for comprehensive immigration reform that will keep families together and treat immigrants fairly. NCIWR and NAPAWF are bringing our unique expertise on the experience and needs of immigrant women to the campaign. Will you [join us](#) on March 21 for the March for America?

For more information, read [NAPAWF's principles for immigration reform](#).

» **TAKE ACTION: Stand up with us for immigrant rights.**

ADMINISTRATION WATCH

President Releases His FY 2011 Budget

In January, the President released his [budget](#) for the 2011 fiscal year. The budget includes major gains for the provision of reproductive health services: it contains an increase of almost \$10 million for Title X family planning funds, funds new teen pregnancy prevention programs, and defunds abstinence-only sex education programs. However, the prohibition on using federal dollars to fund abortions for poor women and other women who access federally-funded health insurance remains intact. While we are pleased to see that preventive services and medically accurate sex education programs received an increase in funding this year, we are disappointed that the budget failed to reverse the harmful [Hyde Amendment](#) policy. Stay tuned for a comprehensive factsheet on how the FY 2011 budget will impact API women and girls on our [website](#).

NAPAWF Supports the Confirmation of Dawn Johnsen

NAPAWF supports the confirmation of Dawn Johnsen, whose nomination almost

a year ago as the Assistant Attorney General to the Office of Legal Counsel has been stalled because she has worked to secure *Roe v. Wade*. Ms. Johnsen would be the first woman to hold this U.S. Department of Justice position. NAPAWF urges Congress to act quickly to confirm this highly qualified nominee.

IN THE COURTS

Supreme Court Rules on Campaign Finance Case

In January, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the government may not stop corporations from spending money supporting or opposing candidates for President or seats in Congress. In *Citizens United v. FEC*, a five-justice majority ruled that, while corporations are still forbidden from directly contributing to election campaigns, they may spend money on campaign ads designed to sway the electorate regarding candidates for public office.

NAPAWF believes that the power of democracy lies in its ability to accommodate the full participation of underrepresented voices. We are disappointed by the Supreme Court's ruling and view it as a threat to this bedrock principle of democracy. As API women are underrepresented at the decision-making level in the majority of American corporations, the needs and values of API women and girls will not be taken into account by these entities when they determine which political candidates to support and why.

NAPAWF has faith in the power of individual political action as well as grassroots organizing, and we oppose this ruling because it will dilute the voices of progressive API women individually and collectively in favor of powerful and wealthy corporations. NAPAWF calls on Congress to pass legislation reversing this decision and acknowledging that humans, not corporations, should have a voice in shaping and informing our democratic process.

IN THE STATES

Sex Selection Abortion Bans in State Legislatures

Sex selection abortion bans made the news recently in two states. On February 19, an Oklahoma court [struck down](#) a statute that would have banned abortions

based on a woman's gender preference for her child, as well as created additional burdensome restrictions on women seeking abortions, abortion providers, and clinics. The court determined that the challenged law was unconstitutional because it violated Oklahoma's "single-subject" rule, which requires all laws to address only one topic at a time. And, on February 10, Georgia legislators introduced [HB 1155](#), the so-called "Prenatal Nondiscrimination Bill," which would make it a crime to provide an abortion if the provider knows that the pregnant woman is seeking the abortion because of the race or sex of the fetus.

NAPAWF will [continue](#) to track sex selection abortion bans at the state and national levels and advocate that our communities, not legislators, take the lead on addressing the problem of son preference rather than jeopardize women's reproductive health and threaten our right to make decisions about our bodies.

» **TAKE ACTION: Learn more about sex selection abortion bans.**