

Medicaid Funding of Abortion: *A Matter of Fairness for Poor Women*

The West Virginia Supreme Court has already ruled that denying poor and low-income women funding for abortions violates the protections afforded them by the state Constitution (established in *Women's Health Center v. Panepinto*).

Simply put, HB 3077 would employ the West Virginia Legislature to launch a legal battle. Proponents of the bill want to pass a bill that they know to be unconstitutional, only to engage the citizens and taxpayers of West Virginia in a costly, lengthy lawsuit that hurts the poorest West Virginians.

Singling out abortion for exclusion from government funded health care creates an unjust and discriminatory system in which poor and low-income women do not have the same freedom to make their own decisions as those with more economic resources or those who are covered by private insurance.

A ban on Medicaid funding of abortions will hurt the most disadvantaged women in West Virginia. Poor women, women of color, young women and rural women, who already have insufficient access to reproductive health care, will be hit hard by these funding restrictions.

Compared with the average woman who has an abortion, these women are more likely to be mothers and to have larger families, more likely to suffer from chronic illnesses and more likely to have experienced violence in their lives. A disproportionate number are pregnant as a result of sexual assault.

Poor and low-income women deserve the same access to health care as those who are more fortunate. Every woman, regardless of her economic resources, should have the right to decide whether and when to have a child. Every woman should have the right to shape her own life and plan her future. Sometimes women need public support and public resources in order to exercise these rights, as well as the right to care for their children with dignity.

In addition to guaranteeing women access to the full range of reproductive health care, it is essential to provide welfare benefits that respect women's choices and that permit poor mothers to care for their young children at home. Adequate health care and child care, as well as education and job-training opportunities lift low income parents out of poverty. These measures will ensure that no woman feels compelled to have an abortion because she lacks the financial resources to care for a child.

[Please oppose this unconstitutional attack on poor women.](#)

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