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New Poll Shows WV Voters Oppose Efforts to Change State Constitution and Ban Medicaid Coverage for Abortion

Women's health advocates launch new campaign to defeat proposed coverage ban

CHARLESTON, W.Va.—New polling data released today from Hart Research Associates and Plante and Associates reveals nearly two in three (65%) West Virginia voters support the state's Medicaid insurance plan covering a range of reproductive healthcare services, including annual check-ups, prenatal and maternity care, birth control, and abortion, compared with just 27% who oppose the Medicaid program covering such healthcare services. Voters had significant concerns about the effort underway by state lawmakers to change the state constitution and ban Medicaid coverage for abortion in the state.

Further findings from the poll include:

- By an 18-point margin (54% to 36%), West Virginia voters say they do NOT want the state legislature to vote to overturn the state supreme court's decision that protects Medicaid coverage of abortion.
- Nearly seven in 10 (69%) West Virginia voters align with the view that regardless of how one feels about abortion, politicians should not be allowed to deny a woman health coverage for it just because she is poor.
- Sixty-four percent (64%) of West Virginia voters say that debating and passing legislation to overturn the state supreme court's decision by banning abortion coverage in Medicaid is the wrong issue for the legislature to be spending time on, compared with just 31% who want to see their legislators spending time on this issue.

A memo detailing the poll findings can be found [here](#).

"West Virginians want our politicians focused on good jobs and healthy families—not launching politically motivated attacks that take away health care," said **Margaret Chapman Pomponio, Executive Director of WV FREE**. "West Virginia's Medicaid program should cover annual check-ups, maternity care, family planning, and abortion, and most West Virginia voters agree."

"This polling data should be a wake-up call for some of our state lawmakers. The research shows there simply isn't a mandate from voters to ban Medicaid from covering abortion," said **Mike Plante, Founder and President, Plante and Associates**. "West Virginians simply don't want to see the state legislature spend time debating and passing a measure to overturn the state supreme court's decision by banning abortion coverage in Medicaid. Even many of those who personally oppose abortion believe politicians should not be allowed to deny a woman health coverage for it just because she is poor."

Today, WV FREE and their partners also announced the launch of the Health Not Politics campaign to defeat the proposed ban on Medicaid coverage for abortion. WV FREE, along with American Civil

Liberties Union-WV, Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, National Association of Social Workers-WV, St. John's Episcopal Church, Call to Action for Racial Equality (CARE), Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Women's Health Center, West Virginia Citizen Action Group, West Virginians for Affordable Health Care, Boss Babes and Kanawha Valley NOW is organizing a statewide campaign including print and digital advertising, social media, a lobby day, and more.

Research from the Guttmacher Institute shows that, nationally, bans on Medicaid coverage for abortion, like the one proposed by West Virginia lawmakers, force approximately [one in four poor women](#) who seek an abortion to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term. These policies can have long-lasting negative effects on the economic security of women and families. A woman who seeks an abortion but is denied is [more likely to fall into poverty](#) than a woman who is able to access abortion care.

"Abortion can bring up strong feelings for people, and we may not all agree," said **Rev. Marquita L. Hutchens, Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church**. "Yet it's not our place to decide for someone else whether or not she should get an abortion. It is better that she makes that decision with her family and her faith. However we may feel personally, politicians should not change the constitution to take care away from low-income women."

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WV FREE

Founded in 1989, WV FREE (WV Focus: Reproductive Education & Equality) identifies as a reproductive justice organization, working for West Virginia women and families by improving education on reproductive options, increasing access to affordable birth control, reducing teen pregnancy, improving adolescent health, engaging voters about reproductive justice issues, promoting policy that eliminates barriers to education, health care, and economic stability, and protecting personal decision-making, including the decision of whether or when to have a child.

Photos Available:

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