

Socialist Party Health Care Platform

The Socialist Party stands for a socialized health care system based on universal coverage, salaried doctors and health care workers, and revenues derived from a steeply graduated income tax.

1. We give critical support to the demand for the immediate abolition of all private health insurance companies through the creation of a single-payer health system. We see single-payer as an important step in the direction of a fully socialized national health program with full standard and alternative medical, dental, vision, and mental health coverage for all. This system would be publicly funded through progressive taxation and controlled by democratically elected assemblies of health care workers and patients. The National Health Program should improve, and replace, Medicare and Medicaid.

2. We call for a health care system that emphasizes preventive care, respects patients' privacy, gives special attention to the needs of the physically and mentally disabled, and conducts treatment and research unimpaired by sexism, racism, or homophobia.

3. We call for full funding for AIDS research, prevention, and treatment. We demand full civil rights for people living with AIDS.

4. We call for public ownership and worker and community control of the pharmaceutical industry.

5. We call for educational programs to help prevent drug addiction; for voluntary treatment programs for addicts and alcoholics; and for the availability of free, sterile needles for those still using IV drugs.

6. We call for the reinstatement of funding to community mental health services so that low-cost or no-cost treatment is available on a voluntary basis, with clients' rights respected. We oppose involuntary incarceration for treatment without due process.

7. We support the right to choose or refuse medical treatment, the right to die, and the right to assisted suicide.

8. We call for full community decision-making regarding the creation, organization or elimination of public health care facilities.



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The Hyde Amendment and Obama's Health Care Bill: Two Wrongs Make a Disaster for Abortion Rights



Socialist Party USA
Women's Commission

A major provision of the health care bill being put forward by the Obama administration—and opportunistically maneuvered through the House of Representatives, and next the Senate, by the Democratic leadership—shows just how disregarding the US government continues to be when it comes to abortion rights.

This provision would expand the scope of the Hyde Amendment—that nasty piece of national legislation that since 1976 has prohibited the use of federal funds for abortion—to include private health insurance plans partially subsidized by the federal government. This means that additional millions of women would be denied abortion as one of their health care options. Its inclusion in the health care bill is an outrageous capitulation by the Obama administration to the Catholic Church, religious fundamentalists, and Congressional conservatives and hypocrites of both the Democratic and Republican parties. We must fight back: No national health care system that denies the right to abortion on demand! Repeal the Hyde Amendment!

Here is some background on the Hyde Amendment. Named for its sponsor, Representative Henry Hyde (R-III), this law began wending its way through Congress in June 1976, as an amendment to the Health, Education, and Welfare (now the Health and Human Services) budget. Designed to exclude women on Medicaid from full reproductive health services by prohibiting federal funding for abortions, it was the first direct attack on the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision of 1973. After political jockeying by Republicans and Democrats, the bill passed in September 1976, after court challenges to its constitutionality were rejected, the Hyde Amendment went into effect in August 1977. It was both a response to, and encouragement

for, agitation and violence by such virulent anti-abortion groups as Operation Rescue and Army of God.

Since 1976, the Hyde Amendment has been inserted each year into the HHS budget, often without debate. That is, it has been kept on the books for over 30 years thanks to Democratic and Republican Congress-people and Presidents alike. In the 1980's, Congress widened its scope to include federal employees and their dependents, Native Americans, military personnel and their dependents, federal prisoners, and low-income residents of the District of Columbia.

Now Congress is at it again, this time using the motivation and arguments underlying the Hyde Amendment to deny even more women abortion access.

Clearly, immediate actions are called for—not only to block the anti-abortion provision of the Obama health care bill, but also to demand the repeal of the Hyde Amendment.

So join us to get the word out about the Hyde Amendment and the Obama health care bill. Let's make sure that the public is aware of how Obama and the Democratic leadership are curtailing women's rights in the guise of health care reform. Let it be widely known that the Democratic Party has given up all pretence of being pro-choice.

The radical Left needs to offer an alternative to the liberal, mainstream organizations such as NARAL and NOW, whose placating strategies make them complicit in the ongoing assaults on abortion rights. From our position outside the Democratic Party, we can and must present the much-needed voice of socialist feminism—one that places abortion access in the context of socialized health care human rights, social

and economic justice, and independent political action.

More travesties like the Hyde Amendment and the anti-abortion provision of the Obama health care bill will be perpetrated unless we continue to demand an end to restrictive state and federal laws, to the wholly inadequate number of abortion facilities and providers, and to health care discrimination leveled against young, low-income, and immigrant women, and women of color.

Only our persistent and militant grassroots efforts will bring about the repeal of the Hyde Amendment and the defeat of the Obama health care bill. Through collective action, we can achieve our fundamental objective: a comprehensive system of socialized health care within a society that guarantees the right to reproductive freedom and health care justice and equity, and that ends all forms of violence against women.

*Passed by the SPUSA Women's Commission
November 2009*