

House agenda will hurt women's health

COMMUNITYVIEW

Too many women and families cannot afford the health care they need and deserve. Prices are rising even as the economy continues to struggle, and women continue to earn less than men. To make matters worse, new House leadership and Rep. Mike Pence are aggressively pushing a dangerous agenda to take health care away from women.

Recently, House leaders launched the most devastating legislative assault on women's health care in American history. They are aiming to eliminate the national family planning program, known as Title X, and they want to deny Planned Parenthood the federal funds it receives to provide affordable cancer

screenings, birth control, HIV testing and counseling, and STD testing and treatment. Simply put, their legislative attack will cut off health care to millions of women who need it the most.

Under the guise of deficit reduction, these House leaders, who share an extreme agenda, are working to end this popular and effective program that does so much to prevent unintended pregnancy and provide essential health care. If they succeed, millions of women across the country will lose access to basic primary and preventive health care, such as lifesaving cancer screenings, contraception, HIV testing and counseling, and annual exams. Sixty percent of the women who are cared for by Planned Parenthood

and similar health centers report that these centers are their only source of health care.

More than 90 percent of the care Planned Parenthood health centers offer is preventive, yet Rep. Pence is steadfast in wanting to defund Planned Parenthood, because it also provides women with abortion care. Every year, Planned Parenthood doctors and nurses carry out nearly one million lifesaving screenings for cervical cancer and 830,000 breast exams. Eliminating this program means that more women will go untreated and will discover too late that they have cancer. They also provide contraception to nearly 2.5 million patients and nearly four million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections, includ-

ing HIV. Title X saves lives.

As for fiscal discipline and deficit reduction, family planning programs like Title X save money. For every public dollar invested in family planning, taxpayers save nearly \$4. Yet, in their ideological zeal to attack women's health, the House leadership doesn't seem to care.

The House leadership is clearly out of touch with the needs and wishes of the American people, especially those of women. These extreme proposals are bad policy, bad politics and bad for the health of women. That's why we urge Congress to reject this dangerous assault on women's health.

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