

public affairs update

The Hot Topic: Health Care Reform

With rising health care costs and increasingly empty pockets, health care reform is the topic on everyone's mind. Congress is working vigorously towards passing a reform bill while under a very tight time line from President Obama. According to the President's web site, he is committed to working with Congress to pass a comprehensive health care reform bill.

While the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee recently released a draft of its health care legislation aimed at "assuring reliable, high quality and affordable health insurance for all Americans," there are several other proposals for health care reform on the table.

Planned Parenthood is committed to expanding coverage for comprehensive reproductive health care services and ensuring that community-based health care providers like Planned Parenthood are included in health plan networks. In addition, Planned Parenthood is working with key members of Congress to ensure that any expansions to the Medicaid program work best for women. To that end, Planned Parenthood is advocating for any health care reform legislation to include: 1) the Medicaid family planning expansion, which would eliminate the state waiver process.; 2) existing Medicaid protections for family planning service and 3) better reimbursement for providers under Medicaid.

Planned Parenthood is also a member of the Health Care for America Now! (HCAN) coalition which is advocating for quality, affordable coverage with comprehensive benefits, choice of private or public Health insurance plans, and equal access to care in all communities. With many proposals on the table, it will be interesting to see what the final product is once the negotiating process is over.

Obama Eliminates Abstinence-Only Funding!

In May, President Obama released his proposed budget which eliminated the federal funding for ineffective abstinence-only programs. Obama recommends that Congress fund "evidence-based" teen pregnancy prevention programs with an investment of \$110 million in comprehensive sex education. This is a significant step towards eliminating abstinence-only education programs nationwide.

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Sonia Sotomayor: Next Supreme Court Justice?

The road to the Supreme Court has begun for Sonia Sotomayor, President Obama's nominee for Supreme Court. Sotomayor would replace retiring Justice David Souter.

Judge Sotomayor is a highly qualified legal professional, who brings nearly two decades of federal judicial experience to the high court. Judge Sotomayor would be the first Hispanic and third woman in history to serve on the nation's highest court.

As a part of the confirmation process, Sotomayor began making visits to key Senators including Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter. Before a full Senate vote to confirm the nomination, Judge Sotomayor must testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee answering questions on her judicial record and approach to constitutional issues.

Currently, leadership is discussing the timing of the hearings for the Senate Judiciary Committee and the confirmation vote. Democrats seem to want to move quickly with hearings and a vote prior to the August recess while Republicans have made it clear they want to wait until after the August recess in order to properly review Sotomayor's record.

Speaking of the Judge's record, there has been much speculation over Sotomayor's record on abortion rights. This has lead reproductive rights organizations to call upon the Senate Judiciary Committee to explore that further during the hearings.

Upcoming Events: Mark your Calendars!

- Volunteer Appreciation Night: 1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia
June 16th - 5:30-7:30pm - RSVP to 215-351-5580
- Volunteer Night: 1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia
June 17th - 5:00-7:30pm - RSVP to 215-351-5580
- Cocktails for a Cause - Vango Lounge and Skybar, 116 S. 18th Street
June 23rd -5:00-8:00pm - RSVP to 215-351-5567

For more information about these or other PPSP events, contact the External Affairs Department at: 215.351.5585 or by email at: externalaffairs@ppsp.org.

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