



**PRESS RELEASE
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**On the 42nd Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*
It's Time to Lift Funding Restrictions**

Statement by
In Our Own Voices: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda

(Washington, DC) - Today marks the 42nd anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, that granted the right to legal abortion to women in the United States. While we celebrate that ruling, we must not forget that for many low-income women, especially women of color, there has been only limited access to that right.

Three years after *Roe*, in 1976, Representative Henry Hyde and his colleagues in Congress deliberately banned the use of federal funds for abortions for women who get their health care insurance through Medicaid. And for the last 38 years, the Hyde Amendment, as the ban is called, has disproportionately impacted low-income women, women of color and immigrant women.

It is the Hyde Amendment that forces low-income women to wait longer than they should while they seek ways to cover the cost of an abortion. And while supporters of abortion rights have built a network of organizations that raises funding for these women, it is not enough. Other restrictive federal and state laws, such as waiting periods, hospital admitting requirements and clinic shutdowns add to the difficulty low-income women face when seeking an abortion.

Today, on the anniversary of *Roe*, we applaud policymakers, jurists, medical professionals and activists who have fought these forty-two years to make the Court's decision a reality. We applaud President Obama's inclusion of abortion rights in his State of the Union remarks on Tuesday, re-enforcing his belief that "every woman should have access to the health care she needs." We also applaud the reintroduction of the much-needed Women's Health Protection Act - a bill that will protect the rights promised under *Roe*. These are important steps forward.

But after 38 years, it is time to ensure that low-income women be included, rather than excluded, in the legal protections of *Roe*.

It is not enough that the President advocated abortion rights for all women, if federal and state policymakers continue to curtail those rights. It is not enough that the Women's Health Protection Act was reintroduced, if the critical issue of funding still goes unaddressed.

Many will say that this conservative Congress offers no opportunity to change what has become annual policy. They will say that efforts to eliminate Hyde forever are futile in this political environment. They would be wrong.

While we must all fight to defeat the new onslaught of anti-choice bills that will come from this new Congress, we must not forget the women who have already been left behind. Now is the ideal time to proclaim that all women are equal under *Roe*. Now is the time to build a grassroots movement of women and men who will fight to make *Roe* a reality for all women.

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