

Senate Finance and Budget Committees  
Washington, DC 20010

October 14, 2005

Dear Senator,

As leaders in the faith community, we are writing to express our concern about potential budget cuts affecting essential women's reproductive health care services provided through Medicaid. These cuts are being considered as a means to balance the budget and pay for the rebuilding the Gulf Coast region after the devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

We strongly support the government's involvement in the hurricane relief effort and do not wish to see cutbacks on the disaster assistance. However, as organizations devoted to social justice, we object to spending cuts to safety net programs that help the poorest Americans. In addition to low-income women across the country who depend solely on Medicaid for family planning services, numerous storm victims will rely on Medicaid during the initial recovery period, and a portion of those families will continue to require the services for years to come.

For many women, Medicaid provides prescription contraceptives, gynecological exams and testing for and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. Cutting spending or increasing premiums for services will reduce access to these preventive health care measures and put the health of some women at serious risk.

We urge you to continue current funding for Medicaid. Any cuts to the program will force the most vulnerable in our society to go without basic medical care. Please, protect the social safety net programs that have helped so many in our country.

Sincerely,

Rev. Carlton Veazey  
President and CEO, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Rev. Dr. Ken Brooker Langston, Director  
Disciples Justice Action Network (Disciples of Christ)

Nancy Hunt Wirth  
Disciples for Choice

Maureen Shea  
Director of Government Relations  
The Episcopal Church

Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory,  
Director, Washington Office  
Presbyterian Church(USA)

Rob Keithan  
Director, Washington Office for Advocacy  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

Rev. Loey Powell  
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Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ