Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2012

Dear Speaker Boehner, Chairman Rogers, and Chairman Rehberg:

We write to ask for a clarification on the Republican leadership's position on contraception. The House Appropriations Committee recently released its FY 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS) funding bill. This legislation zeroes out funding for the Title X family planning program. Title X of the Public Health Service Act funds breast cancer screenings and HIV testing as well as critical family planning programs. This program helps improve the health of men and women, prevents unintended pregnancies, improves outcomes for children, and reduces the rates of abortion throughout the United States.

Many members of your party have recently noted the availability of contraceptive services at clinics throughout the country. For example, Congressmen Darrell Issa (R-CA), Trey Gowdy (R-SC), Lamar Smith (R-TX), Trent Franks (R-AZ), Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), and Steve King (R-IA) have all noted in recent committee hearings that many members of the public can get contraception for little or no cost at family planning clinics (or other locations). According to Senator Dean Heller (R-NV), "This country spends billions on allowing for free access of contraception. Go to any health clinic and that access is available." Unfortunately this claim is not entirely accurate; we have only made modest but effective investments in Title X. Title X funding for FY 2012 is $293.9 million and we had requested $327.4 million for FY 2013. Unfortunately, this request was not only denied, but as we noted above, Title X was completely zeroed out in the FY 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services (LHHS) funding bill.

Title X served more than 5.2 million patients in 2010. So while Congressman Tom Price (R-GA) has said there is "not one" woman that doesn't have access to contraception in the United States, unfortunately there are still many women in need.

We had been encouraged to hear such support for federal family planning programs throughout the country, and expected that all members, no matter which party they belong to, to come together on a bipartisan basis to support Title X. Considering that under your leadership, you proposed to defund Title X, we ask that you clarify your party's position on access to and availability of contraceptive methods for American men and women.

Sincerely,

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress

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